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ABSTRACT

This course aims to give experienced practitioners additional knowledge and skill in relation to the following: changing contexts of national policy and delivery practices in adult literacy and basic education; current theories, issues, and concerns informing practice in the field; and their own practice in light of these reviews. It is intended as a nationally accredited graduate-level course in professional development. An overview provides information on the course curriculum, including the following: structure, assessment, and course delivery; a guide for the course presenter that addresses participants, purpose, elements of competency, flexible delivery, negotiation, content, course structure and organization, introductory workshop, journals, and assessment; and information for the participants with rationale and key features of the course. The course is composed of three core modules with a total of approximately 80 hours. Each module consists of these elements: outline of structure and requirements and lists of highly recommended resources and additional resources. Each module then presents participants with a series of questions and reading and learning activities, written along the lines of a self-paced learning guide. Presenters and participants negotiate the number and choice of learning activities to be undertaken; the range, depth, and conditions for each activity; and the assessment requirements. The modules cover adult learners and learning, curriculum areas and issues, and program development. The 17 readings are provided in a separate section at the end. (YLB)

ED 387 659

Adult Literacy & Basic Education

LITERACY

a flexible delivery program

A project
commissioned by

National Staff Development Committee
for Vocational Education
and Training

CE070854

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Adult LITERACY *Teaching*

A flexible delivery program

A project commissioned by the
National Staff Development Committee for Vocational Education and Training

1995

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is the result of a project commissioned by the
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Project development

Development of *Adult Literacy Teaching: A flexible delivery program*, was commissioned by the National Staff Development Committee for Vocational Education and Training. The project brief was to revise the original course, *Adult Literacy Teaching: A professional development course* (ACTC & DEVETIR Qld, 1992) by:

- designing it as a competency based curriculum
- modifying it in the light of recent changes and current issues in the field and
- converting it to flexible delivery mode.

The project was conducted by representatives of a Consortium comprising:

- the State Adult Literacy Unit of South Australia
- the Customised Training Unit of the Tea Tree Gully Institute of Training and Further Education, South Australia and
- Luminis Pty Ltd, University of Adelaide, South Australia.

Acknowledgments

The Consortium and the Project Team thank the following organisations and persons who contributed to the project

- Coordinators of trials of curriculum and materials:
  Carmel Darling and Annie Hastwell, Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority, Darwin
  Angela Simpson and Lilian Whitmarsh, Great Southern Region College of TAFE, Albany, Western Australia
  Baljit Bhela, Port Augusta Campus, Spencer Institute of TAFE, South Australia
  Anne Walsh and Robiny Stricker, Outer Eastern College of TAFE, Victoria
- All members of the Advisory Committee and the National Focus Group
- Other individuals who participated in the opinion survey early in 1994 and who responded to the penultimate draft distributed for comment in December 1994
- Advisory Centre for University Education, University of Adelaide

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State and territory representatives on the Advisory Committee were members of the National Adult Literacy and Basic Education Professional Development Reference Committee of the National Staff Development Committee for Vocational Education and Training.

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Adult LITERACY *Teaching*

A flexible delivery program

Course curriculum

1 Course name, qualification and ASF level

Course name

Adult Literacy Teaching: A flexible delivery program

Proposed credential

The course is intended to be accredited nationally as a graduate level course in professional development. Practitioners who complete the course will be issued with a Statement of Achievement which may be used as the basis for securing transfer of credit with various university postgraduate and/or inservice awards.

ASF Level Level 6

2 Course development

The project team initially rewrote *Adult Literacy Teaching: A professional development course* (ACTC/DEVETIR Qld, 1992) in competency based terms and presented a draft outline and a series of questions regarding the directions for further revision of the course to a one-day workshop of the representative National Focus Group held in Adelaide on December 16 1993.

Publication of the report of the national project 'What is a Competent ABE Teacher?' as *The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting Best Practice* (University of Technology, Sydney, 1993) offered a framework for the course outcomes. This was reinforced by the National Staff Development Committee's publication of its two courses, *Induction Program for ALBE Personnel* and *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel,* which were related to the units of competence described in the UTS report.

Following endorsement for the approach being adopted through a national opinion survey, telephone interviews and some interstate meetings, the Advisory Committee in March 1994 gave approval for revising *Adult Literacy Teaching* as a course for experienced practitioners who hold graduate qualifications and/or extensive experience in the field. In particular, it was recognised that the revised course should address the UTS units of competence for monitoring students' learning and for evaluation of programs; include a component on curriculum; and modify the existing component on numeracy in view of the parallel development of an Adult Numeracy Teaching professional development program.

A meeting with key members of the National Focus Group during the 1994 Australian Council for Adult Literacy Conference gave further impetus to revision of the course along those lines. The meeting endorsed the draft structure, learning outcomes and assessment approach. This draft was endorsed by the Advisory Committee.

Trials of the curriculum and draft materials were held during the second half of 1994 in the Northern Territory, on a system-wide basis involving collaboration with the Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority and in South Australia, using a distance education approach managed from the Port Augusta Campus of the Spencer Institute of TAFE.

A final consultative review was held in December 1994, including a joint meeting in Adelaide of the Advisory Committee and the National Focus Group. The final draft was widely reviewed in mid-1995.

3 Course outcomes

Course outcomes

This course aims to give experienced practitioners additional knowledge and skills in relation to:
- the changing contexts of national policy and delivery practices in adult literacy and basic education;
- current theories, issues and concerns informing practice in the field;
- their own practice in light of these reviews.

Competency standards

There are no competency standards endorsed by the NTB for this profession.

However, *The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting best practice* (University of Technology, Sydney, 1993) provides competency statements for the ALBE field.

These statements, found in Chapter 4, 'Practitioner Competencies for Adult Basic Education', were developed through national consultation and the competency units and elements are widely endorsed by relevant professional parties. In particular they have been used as a matrix for all the NSDC professional development programs produced from 1993 to 1995.

General competencies

Successful completion of *Adult Literacy Teaching: A flexible delivery course* will contribute to participants' achievement of the following competencies:

Adult learning and teaching approaches and practices
Managing learning situations
Monitoring learning
Evaluation of programs.

Recognition given to the course

Adult Literacy Teaching: A professional development course has been in continuous heavy demand from ALBE personnel since 1992. Revision of the course was given highest priority by the NSDC Adult Literacy and Basic Education Reference Committee in planning for programs developed under its *National Framework for Professional Development of Adult Literacy And Basic Education Personnel* (NSDC 1992 [draft] and 1994).

In advance of the publication of *Adult Literacy Teaching: A flexible delivery program*, this revised course is already in demand.

4 Course structure

Outline of course structure

The course comprises three core modules with a total of approximately 80 hours. Hours for each module may vary within the given range, but the total should not exceed 80 hours.

Module 1 Adult learners and learning	Nominal duration	20 – 25 hours
Module 2 Curriculum areas and issues	Nominal duration	25 – 30 hours
Module 3 Program development	Nominal duration	30 – 35 hours
	Total nominal duration	80 hours

The modules are presented in sequence and will commonly be taken in that order. However, other sequencing may be negotiated according to participants' needs and interests and the consensus of the group.

Each module offers a variety of learning activities designed to assist participants to meet the learning outcomes and satisfy the assessment criteria. Presenters and participants will negotiate the number and choice of learning activities to be undertaken; the range, depth and conditions for each activity; and the assessment requirements. Each learning outcome should be the subject of a substantial discussion between participants and the course presenter, whether in a face to face situation, via teleconferencing or other means.

Requirements to receive the qualification

Modules may be taken in any appropriate order as negotiated.

Choice of assessment tasks must include the **Practical Project**.

Customisation

In terms of the course commitment to both professional development and flexible delivery, presenters are encouraged to adapt the content to ensure that the most up to date theories, policies, issues and concerns are addressed in the light of participants' particular needs.

Entry requirements

Course participants will usually be:
- experienced vocational education teachers and trainers with graduate qualifications and/or adult English language, literacy and numeracy practitioners with graduate qualifications; or
- practitioners without graduate qualifications who are experienced and competent in the ALBE field.

Recognition of prior learning

Participants who are able to demonstrate that they have previously achieved any of the learning outcomes and that their competence is current will be able to negotiate, with the presenter, exemptions from the learning activities related to those outcomes.

5 Assessment

Assessment strategy

Methods for assessing participants' progress in achieving the learning outcomes are a combination of a Practical Project, self-assessment and formal essay-type tasks.

Participants may negotiate whether their Practical Project will comprise 100% or 50% of the assessment requirements, according to the size of the teaching/learning unit which they choose for the focus of their project.

Apart from the Practical Project which is compulsory, assessment options may be negotiated, as well as alternative modes of assignment presentation.

Assessment methods

1 Participants must undertake the **Practical Project**, i.e. they will
   - design, deliver and evaluate a unit of work for a group of students in an ALBE context
   - submit a report describing their project and showing how the teaching and learning processes of the unit of work have been informed by the whole *Adult Literacy Teaching* course.

2 **Self-assessment**: Participants are expected to use self-assessment of their ongoing development of knowledge and skills through
- discussion with colleagues and/or
- discussion with the course presenter and
- maintaining a journal of comments, notes on readings etc. which will also serve as a cumulative professional portfolio.

3 **Essay writing:** participants whose Practical Project comprises 50% have options for essay type tasks which mainly focus on Modules 1 and 2.

Assessment options

Option 1	Practical Project only	approx. 5000 words	100%
Option 2	Practical Project	approx. 2500 words	50%
	plus		
	two essays, one each for Modules 1 and 2	approx. 2500 words total	50%
Option 3	Practical Project	approx. 2500 words	50%
	plus		
	one essay or one major paper for either Module 1 or Module 2	approx. 2500 words	50%
Option 4	Practical Project	approx. 2500 words	50%
	plus		
	two essays or papers based on negotiated topics and/or presentations, one each for Modules 1 and 2	approx. 2500 words total	50%
Option 5	Practical Project	approx. 2500 words	50%
	plus		
	three shorter essays or papers based on presentations and/or topics drawn from the whole course	approx. 1000 words each	50%

Note: The Practical Project is described as 5000 words (100%) or 2500 words (50%), but these numbers are to be treated as a general guide. They are not prescriptive. Presentations may comprise varied materials, such as essay sections together with teaching and learning materials used by the participant, or collected from the students, during the actual unit of work.

6 Delivery of the course

Delivery modes

The course is designed for flexible delivery. It uses a methodology based on a range of negotiable learning activities accompanied by readings which could be undertaken, for example, as:

- a self-paced sequential program with minimal external input and supervision; or
- the basis for an external studies presentation using correspondence or computer disk or fax or e-mail as the regular means of communication between presenter and participants, with occasional whole-group discussions via teleconference or video conference; or
- a series of face-to-face, on-campus workshops, seminars or tutorials.

Further, it is not intended that each module of the course will necessarily be worked through in a linear fashion via a weekly or fortnightly commitment of so many hours. It would be equally effective to cover the content of a section, unit or module in a single period of an appropriate length.

The convenient segmentation of the modules into units and sections is designed to facilitate one-day, two-day or longer workshop/conference approaches, to concentrate focus and sustain interest in the course. Intensive short-course approaches may be used for delivery at a distance, building in teleconferences or video-conferences, as well as on-campus delivery.

Networking among participants is a crucial learning strategy, particularly for those undertaking the course off campus. As most participants will be currently employed, they should have ready access to useful equipment and resources. However, since the basic technology required to do the course work —and to network with colleagues—is a telephone, participation away from their workplace, at a distance, or from home should be feasible for all participants. Increasingly, too, they will have access to computers, facsimile machines, modems and other such facilities at home, thus extending the range of delivery methods.

Minimum competency statements for presenters

Presenters will have a proven ability in delivering professional development programs; be well informed on current policies and theoretical debates; and have extensive experience in the ALBE field.

Resources

The course materials themselves, as long as they are up-dated by presenters and adapted to the needs and interests of each group, contain enough readings, extracts from other primary sources, and references to important books and journals for participants to achieve the learning outcomes and complete the assessment tasks.

Presenters, program managers and supervisors of home-study participants will need to plan ahead to optimise access to sufficient copies of the materials and selected additional resources, using such strategies as bulk loans from a key resource centre or staggering delivery times to facilitate shared use of materials by several institutions. Some course providers may need to lend the materials to participants and retrieve them for re-use after the course has been completed.

Participant groups should be encouraged, with support, to be as self-reliant as possible with respect to widening their reading. For example, responsibility for securing access to key sources could be assigned to individual members who then report back to the group, distribute notes, and so on. Participants should always be invited to bring to the attention of their groups relevant material they possess or know about.

7 Articulation and credit transfer

The original *Adult Literacy Teaching* course articulates with a large number of university courses in the different states and territories, based on standing agreements and individual negotiations. The level of credit varies from institution to institution.

It is anticipated that articulation and transfer of credit for *Adult Literacy Teaching: A Flexible Delivery Program* will still be available to the same or a comparable extent. It is understood, however, that a more coordinated approach to articulation and credit transfer between the vocational education and training sector and universities will be explored during 1995/1996, through the national DEET project to generate a Professional Development Plan for the ALBE and ESL fields.

The setting of assessment options and other features of the course take into account the likelihood that some participants will seek entry into postgraduate studies following completion. The learning activities balance practical relevance with academic pursuits, demanding breadth of perspective and intellectual rigour in both, and there is scope for substantial formal written work to be presented for assessment.

8 Ongoing monitoring and evaluation

Course monitoring and evaluation will depend on arrangements made in the states and territories.

Adult
LITERACY
Teaching

A flexible delivery program

Guide
for the course presenter

Introduction

The process of revising *Adult Literacy Teaching* (ALT) and converting it to flexible delivery mode with a competency-based curriculum has changed the original course considerably in appearance and content.

The revised course incorporates three flexibly designed Modules for study, based on the Readings, with questions or other learning activities for groups or individuals to undertake. Where the desired Readings have not been made available for reproduction, presenters will have to make copies from original sources or from other NSDC ALBE programs.

The content of the new ALT course focuses on important areas of knowledge and skill for the adult literacy and basic education (ALBE) field in the context of practice as it is changing now and as it will change further over the next few years. Significant new factors have arisen since the original ALT was written, such as the emergence of the *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*, and policy commitments to changes such as flexible delivery. Others are still on the horizon as the revised course goes to press, including the National Reporting System and the adoption of strategic plans for implementing the *National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy* in the key areas of flexible delivery, evaluation, research and curriculum.

Participants

Participants will usually be:

- experienced vocational education teachers and trainers or adult English language, literacy and numeracy practitioners with graduate qualifications;
- practitioners without graduate qualifications who are experienced and competent in the ALBE field.

This profile supports one of the key assumptions behind the design of the course, that participants will have some familiarity with the concepts being explored, based on practical experience in the ALBE field. In terms of the framework provided by the report *The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting Best Practice* (Scheeres et al. 1993), participants will have already achieved the learning outcomes described in *Induction Program for ALBE Personnel*, and *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel*, and will be ready to extend their knowledge and skills at a higher professional level across all the elements of competence in the framework.

If potential participants are not at least partially conversant with the major themes addressed by the revised course, their professional development needs will probably be better served by taking *Induction Program for ALBE Personnel* or appropriate modules from *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel*, or other packages according to their particular needs. Over a given period of time, a range of study opportunities should be available within a particular system, institution or organisation for practitioners to choose from, each catering for a different level of professional competence or practical teaching experience in the ALBE field.

Purpose of the course

The main purpose of this course is to give experienced practitioners an opportunity extended over time to step back from their day to day practice in order to:

- review and critique the theories which inform contemporary ALBE practice;
- examine current national policy and other contexts of ALBE delivery;
- interrogate their own practice in the light of these considerations.

Participants should be asked throughout the course to question their own beliefs and practices, to challenge the assertions of theorists, and to examine critically the assumptions underlying policies. They should be encouraged to identify where their actual practice falls short of their ideals and intentions, or their students' needs and expectations, and to ask themselves why.

Elements of competency

The Course Curriculum specifies learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each module of the course, written according to competency-based training principles and terminology. Participants must show that they have achieved all the learning outcomes, through formal assignments, participation in learning activities, self-assessed journal entries and discussion, in order to gain certification for completion of the course. Each learning outcome in the three modules should therefore be the primary focus for negotiation about arrangements for delivery and details of the study load and assessment. Opportunities must also be provided for participants to test and advance their knowledge and skills at several stages throughout each module, by joining in some form of group discussion focused on a learning outcome.

The learning outcomes are broadly comparable with the objectives stated in the original Adult Literacy Teaching course, but they have been informed by recent major changes in the provision of professional development for ALBE personnel.

Firstly, as already mentioned, the revised course recognises the availability of two other study opportunities, established through earlier National Staff Development Committee projects, which cater for teachers who have only recently moved into the ALBE field, or for those already teaching in the field who are looking to upgrade their knowledge and skills in particular areas or aspects of practice. There should not be major overlaps between the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of these programs and those of ALT.

Secondly, ALT was developed in relation to the elements of competence set out in the report of the national investigation undertaken by Hermine Scheeres and a team from the University of Technology, Sydney, as a DEET/International Literacy Year project.

This appeared in 1993 as *The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting Best Practice*. As a result the revision of ALT focuses on:

- deepening knowledge and skills related to elements and units of competence already worked on at introductory or previous programs;
- emphasising competencies in monitoring learning and evaluation of curriculum and programs not covered in the other programs;
- increasing the practitioner's ability to understand and contribute to current issues, policies and theoretical debates in the field.

Flexible delivery

Each module of the revised course presents participants with a series of questions and activities, written along the lines of a self-paced learning guide. They range from reflection on and discussion of their own teaching/learning situations to close critical examination of major pronouncements of language or education theory and relevant national policy. This approach enables the course to be undertaken by individuals or small groups of participants studying at a distance from the course presenter and the institution or organisation offering the course. By using the activities, readings and references provided in each module, or a selection of them negotiated with the course presenter, ALT becomes a more or less self-contained package through which to achieve the learning outcomes.

However, it is not intended that the revised course be undertaken only in this way, nor is it merely an 'external studies' version of the original course, but a total replacement of it. The learning activities are designed to be used as the foundation for on-campus and face to face delivery of the course to large groups of practitioners as much as for independent learning. They are also optional. More activities have been provided than most groups or individuals would be able to cover during the nominal total duration of 80 session hours.

Some activities will be more closely related than others to the particular training needs and professional interests of participants. Such activities may encourage course presenters and their particular groups to explore certain issues more widely than the modules do.

Example: Module 2, 'Curriculum areas and issues', invites participants to read and respond to various theories of language and to different language pedagogies. In so doing it presupposes that participants are already familiar with the main theoretical and pedagogical approaches. If this is not so for a particular group of participants, then the presenter should spend some time formally covering sections of *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel*, e.g. Module 4, 'Linking Theory and Practice' and Module 5, 'Language in ALBE Teaching and Learning', especially Sessions 1 and 6.

Course presenters are, in fact, free to work through the package, choosing to deliver some sections and to ignore others. This is a crucial aspect of the flexibility built into the revised course. The criterion is that successful participants must have achieved the learning outcomes.

The concept of flexible delivery which has guided and informed the revision of ALT is that adopted by the National Committee of Chief Executives of TAFE in 1992, following publication of *Flexible Delivery: A National Framework for Implementation in TAFE*, the report of the Flexible Delivery Working Party which has since come under the Australian National Training Authority and extended its work to cover the whole of the national vocational education and training sector (NVETS).

The report defines flexible delivery as:

> an approach to vocational education and training which allows for the adoption of a range of learning strategies in a variety of learning environments to cater for differences in learning styles, learning interests and needs, and variations in learning opportunities...
>
> Flexible delivery is characterised by:
>
> - flexibility in terms of entry, program components, modes of learning and points of exit
> - learner control and choice regarding the content, sequence, time, place, and method of learning
> - appropriate learner support systems
> - the application of learning technologies where appropriate
> - access to information on courses and services
> - access to appropriate learning resources
> - flexible assessment processes.
>
> (p. 5 & p. 47)

These statements clearly indicate that flexible delivery is not simply a methodology for presenting courses, nor a set of information and communication technologies. It is more a philosophy of how education and training ought to be delivered. It requires a comprehensive and integrated approach to the planning, organisation, operation and evaluation of programs themselves.

The revised ALT course has been produced according to this understanding of flexible delivery.

Negotiation

The key role of the course presenter is to negotiate with participants the pathways through the course, including the arrangements for on- or off-campus delivery, scheduling and timetabling, the order in which the modules, units and sections are taken, the selection of learning activities and the details of assessment processes. This negotiation will need to be sustained throughout the course, striking a balance between the ideals of flexible delivery stated above and the practical realities of the course presenter's and the participants' situations.

How the course is adapted and delivered will depend on negotiation about such factors as:

- the backgrounds and training needs of the participants
- the physical proximity of the participants to the course presenter and each other
- access to libraries and other resources
- the information and communication technologies available to both the course presenter and the participants including: teleconference facilities, computers, modems, e-mail or similar equipment and fax machines
- the funds available to support delivery.

The learning activities in the modules make no assumptions about the modes by which the course may be delivered and undertaken, except for the reasonable supposition that every participant will have access to a telephone which will enable information exchange and discussion to take place with at least one other participant. Providing opportunities for discussion of the content is one of the fundamentals for effective delivery of the course. Each learning outcome must be the focus of a face to face general discussion or a teleconference or video-conference.

It is also assumed that dialogue can be established among participants, or between them and course presenters, or with colleagues in the participants' workplaces.

The learning activities frequently refer to discussion along these lines, including the notion of a study partner. Course presenters should arrange for participants who are studying off-campus and at a distance, and who may well be the only ALBE practitioner in their workplace, to be linked with at least one other participant to discuss the course content by telephone or other electronic means. Course presenters should encourage off-campus participants who live reasonably close to each other to meet on a few occasions throughout the course.

Content

The content is organised as a series of learning activities related to readings provided for each module and to participants' critical reflections on the current theories and policies which guide and inform the ALBE field. It is assumed that participants have a fair degree of experience and confidence in their practice. For the most part, they will not be dealing with concepts that are new to them. Rather, they will be able to explore more comprehensively, and more critically, a range of concepts they have already encountered in their practice and reading.

Each module either overtly or otherwise sets out to explore the interplay between the three component parts of every ALBE program. These are

- the teacher or trainer, including:
    - core educational and professional values
    - theoretical stance
    - personality factors
    - sociocultural background
    - teaching experiences
    - teaching methodology;
- the students, including:
    - who they are
    - their culture, educational background and life experiences
    - why they are in the program;
- the program context, including:
    - the current political agenda
    - dominant educational policies
    - the policies and procedures of the institution offering the program
    - funding opportunities and constraints on funding.

While the content was up-to-date at the time the revised ALT course was finally drafted (early 1995), it will be necessary for course presenters to adapt or replace readings and activities so as to maintain the currency of the course each time it is delivered. Participants must be provided with opportunities to keep abreast of developments in the field and to address any immediate puzzlement and concern they have about changes taking place in national policy, educational theory or other areas affecting their practice.

Some readings and activities will be superseded very quickly because of shifts in national vocational education and training strategies or policy developments in the ALBE field. Here are several examples.

- Consideration of the National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy will need to be extended to include examination of strategies for research, evaluation, professional development and curriculum based on NCAELLS, once these are adopted in 1996.
- Discussion of the flexible delivery of ALBE programs will become more

focused on how to implement flexible delivery after publication of the report of the 1994–5 DEET/ALLP project to develop a draft national strategic plan for flexible delivery of adult literacy, English language and numeracy programs.

- *Adult Literacy Teaching* only refers briefly to the proposed National Reporting System, based on the *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*, though it is likely to be a major focus for professional debate as soon as it appears.

A different reason for updating course content will be the impact of information and communication technologies on teaching and learning in the ALBE field. This will receive much closer attention as the necessary facilities, equipment and software, and the skills and confidence required to use them, become more widespread. Initiatives such as the Science, Technology and Maths (STEM) Adult Literacy Project will have a big influence. Again, the linguistic, educational or other ideologies which dominate ALBE practice at any given time may be challenged by developments overseas, or by new thinking reflected in the periodical literature or in keynote addresses at major conferences.

Other variations to the content may also be desirable to ensure that the needs of participants are met.

- They could attend one-off professional development programs, conferences, workshops etc.

- Readings and activities could be changed because presenters or participants are aware of an alternative reference or an address by a linguistic expert or educationist which covers a particular concept or topic better than the course material does.

- A guest lecturer may be available, or a resident expert, or a colleague who has served on a national committee or project, and who may be able to deliver some of the content and provide variety and a change of pace.

- Participants themselves may, in fact, have expertise in particular areas which they could be invited to share with the course group.

Another way to sustain current focus is to invite participants to identify particular topics they wish to explore, whether individually or in groups. Accordingly, many of the learning activities described in the modules lend themselves to participants reading periodicals of the field, and investigating and reporting back on issues such as current national projects, research initiatives, new teaching and learning approaches and innovative resources.

The assessment options allow participants to negotiate topics for action research or academic investigation which they report back to their study partners or fellow participants. There is also some overlap in the concepts or even the specific content covered by certain readings and the associated learning activities. Participants may wish to share the study load, and at the same time pursue individual interests, by dividing the readings among themselves and taking responsibility for leading discussions about them.

Structure and organisation of the course

The course comprises three core modules totalling about 80 hours, with individual times for the modules being within the given range, as follows:

Module 1: Adult Learners and Learning	Nominal duration 20–25 hours
Module 2: Curriculum Areas and Issues	Nominal duration 25–30 hours
Module 3: Program Development	Nominal duration 30–35 hours

Details of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, together with the methodology and assessment options are set out in the Course Curriculum, and in the Outline of Structure and Requirements at the beginning of the modules. Each module also contains a brief Introduction to its contents, a list of Highly Recommended Resources (including bibliographical references for the readings) and Suggested Additional Resources.

Course presenters will need to confer with participants at the beginning of each presentation of the course on the order of the modules, their units and sections, on the total amount of time to be devoted to each module within the parameters indicated, on the scheduling and timetabling of group sessions, deadlines for assignments and other organisational matters. Some particular details, such as the selection of learning activities and assessment options, will need to be re-negotiated at the beginning of each module or flexibly during the program.

Where the course is conducted with a group of on-campus participants, presenters are encouraged to negotiate with participants and try approaches to scheduling and timetabling other than the conventional weekly workshop throughout consecutive terms or semesters. Sections and whole units of the course lend themselves to completion of the readings and learning activities in a concentrated format such as a one-day intensive workshop or a two- or three-day conference. A module might be undertaken via two or three short sessions, set several weeks apart to give participants time to:

- explore the implications of what they learn for their practice
- undertake wider reading and/or
- finish assignments.

It could then be concluded with the major assessment task. Institutional arrangements and funding for professional development may make such approaches feasible and even preferable for program managers, presenters and participants compared to regular commitments of time over a protracted period.

A major strength of the course lies in the opportunities it offers participants to explore and integrate concepts from the different disciplines and the linguistic and educational theories which impact on teaching and learning in ALBE.

It is not acceptable for assessment of the teaching and learning gains to be matched up and measured one by one against the individual assessment criteria. A broader approach will assist participants to develop and articulate a personal philosophy of practice which incorporates a complex set of concepts and methods. As they achieve the learning outcomes of each module, this in turn builds towards the participants being able to design, document and evaluate a significant unit of their own work. In this way they will demonstrate their understanding of the wide range of issues covered by the course.

Introductory workshop

Trials of earlier drafts of the course curriculum and study materials established the value of conducting an introductory workshop to orient participants to the purposes of the course, to outline the structure and organisation and cover some key topics. For example, a two-day workshop conducted with a large group in Darwin included:

- exploration of the notion of teachers as theory makers;
- identification of participants' particular training needs, their questions and priorities;
- clarification of the 'big picture' of government policies and practices affecting the operation of ALBE in the Northern Territory, addressing part of the Adult Learners and Learning module;
- discussion of the effects of sociocultural contexts and assumptions about language on teaching and learning, based on key readings and addressing part of the Curriculum Areas and Issues module;
- overview of the course;
- explanation of the assessment tasks and options;
- planning the study program during the next semester by particular regional groups with their facilitators.

Journals

Much of the learning in the course is intended to be completed by participants on the basis of individual reading, reflection and self-assessment. For these purposes, participants are expected to maintain a journal in which to keep their comments on the readings, notes in preparation for discussions or assignments, input from guest speakers, and other records of their involvement in the course.

After considering a wide range of both negative and positive reactions to the notion of keeping a journal during consultations and trials, it was decided that the journal is a useful tool for assisting and enhancing learning during the course itself. It also provides participants with the opportunity to develop a substantial portfolio of discussion papers, lesson plans, teaching and learning resources and other materials for future use when applying for employment or further study. There is much professional value in self assessment and course presenters are therefore urged to encourage participants to maintain a journal for their personal learning and development, while reassuring them that their journals will not be submitted for formal assessment.

Assessment

Details of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and tasks are provided in the Outline of Structure and Requirements for each module. It is important that participants realise from the outset that their competence in terms of achieving the learning outcomes will be assessed by course presenters from their participation in communication during the course, from contributions to the major discussions focused on each learning outcome and from performance in their assignments. They will not be expected to undergo detailed testing of the knowledge and skills they have acquired against each assessment criterion. Also, beyond the stipulation that all participants will design, deliver, evaluate and report on a unit of teaching and learning, a significant degree of freedom is offered to participants in selecting the assignments they undertake.

Clearly the assessment tasks and procedures negotiated by course presenters with the participants constitute a very important component of the overall teaching and learning process. Moreover, participants should be enabled to use alternatives to formal essays if they wish, such as audiotapes, video-tapes or computer disk presentation, and to develop their assignments into articles for journals, for use as materials for conducting workshops with other ALBE practitioners, or in presentations at professional forums or conferences.

The assessment options recognise that some participants will want to obtain advanced standing for higher education courses. Wherever possible, the assessment tasks should be based on prior consultation, with key staff in the chosen higher education institution, about academic expectations and the formalities of applying for credit transfer. For portfolio and RPL purposes participants may be required to keep copies of assignments, which they may have to lodge with their request for credit in higher education courses.

Summary of the course presenter's role

The course presenter may be responsible for some, or all, of the following, according to the particular situation and local practice:

- overall organisation and management of the course and all its logistical arrangements
- dissemination of information about ALT to potential participants
- selection of participants in accordance with the participant profile

- negotiating learning pathways with participants according to their training needs and professional interests
- reviewing all ALT materials for currency and applicability
- updating and supplementing course readings and learning activities in keeping with developments in the field
- conducting presentations or facilitating workshops on course topics
- organising guest lecturers and other special teaching and learning arrangements
- assisting participants to gain access to essential resources
- negotiating assessment tasks and marking assignments
- negotiating course scheduling and timetabling with participants
- arranging or facilitating regular meetings or other forms of contact and communication between participants and each other or the course presenter
- supporting participants throughout the course.

Adult LITERACY *Teaching*

A flexible delivery program

Information *for the participants*

This introduction to *Adult Literacy Teaching: A flexible delivery program* (ALT) should be read first of all, together with the overall Course Curriculum, and the Outline of Structure and Requirements at the beginning of each module. This will give you a basic orientation to the aims and formal requirements of the course. By reading the Guide for the Course Presenter, you could also familiarise yourself with matters that the presenter will be drawing to your attention and negotiating with you at the beginning of the course.

Rationale for the course

Underpinning the development of *Adult Literacy Teaching* in its revised form is the perception that as teachers we are constantly striving to map a clear and consistent pathway, for ourselves as well as for our students, through complex, conflicting and even contradictory demands. These may be imposed from the outside, by socioeconomic circumstances, for example, or by policy frameworks, the physical conditions in which teaching and learning take place, or the availability of resources. They may also be imposed from within, perhaps by constraints of background or pressures of personal needs, hopes and ambitions.

In a quotation used as the keynote for the course, Christine Davis stresses the importance of dealing with harmonies and contradictions which arise between intentions and actions, and defines the concept of a 'base line' for teachers:

> the interaction between intention and action provides part of what I call the base line from which teachers can function... the more this is articulated, the stronger a teacher becomes, because more is understood. The role of external theories - all those injunctions from within the system and without, about what we should be doing in our classrooms - now can become more manageable... The stronger our base line, the more likely we will be not to comply or resist mindlessly, but to think about the demands and constraints, and to see how they fit.
>
> (Davis 1987, quoted in Beattie 1991, p. 5.8)

The basic purpose of ALT may be described as helping participants to find their 'base line' within the meaning and significance Christine Davis gives to this term. As the work of ALBE practitioners becomes more complicated and problematic, the need to define and maintain their certainties takes on greater importance.

Developing your capacity, in the light of your own experiences and beliefs, to question the policies and guidelines, theoretical ideologies, and methodological orthodoxies which influence what you are able to do as teachers is the hub of this course. The learning activities are designed to give ample scope for participants to read widely, reflect, critique and discuss the roles and expectations placed by current forces in vocational education and training on ALBE practitioners and clients alike. The professional development focus of the course is mainly concerned with the theories of adult English language and literacy teaching and learning, the needs and interests of particular client groups, and the demands of organisations and funding agencies.

Key features of the course

The course provides a program, and a selection of readings and learning activities through which you, as experienced practitioners, will be encouraged and assisted to reflect critically on major current developments, theories and practices in the ALBE field. You will be stimulated to think about your own philosophy and practice in relation to current theories, methodology and policy developments, and to enhance your knowledge and skills in designing, implementing, monitoring and assessing learning experiences for your students, and evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of your teaching.

The course is divided into three modules:

Module 1: Adult Learners and Learning
Module 2: Curriculum Areas and Issues
Module 3: Program Development

Each module is further divided into units and some units are divided into sections. Although the modules are presented in numerical order, it is possible to begin with any module, unit or section and proceed in any order you wish according to your own background and priority training needs, provided that this is negotiated with the course presenter and your fellow participants. The only firm restriction placed on the sequencing of the learning activities is that the course must finish with the Practical Project. It is also hoped that presenters and participants will adopt a flexible approach to the timetabling of sessions and will take full advantage of the assessment options.

Each module offers a series of learning activities designed to focus attention on issues, to stimulate reflection and discussion, and assist you to build knowledge and skills in terms of the learning outcomes. It is not necessary to work through all of these activities in a lock-step manner. Indeed, it is undesirable and inadvisable. In keeping with the philosophy of the course about both professional development and flexible delivery, the activities are fundamentally optional and many of them contain choices or suggest alternatives. The design of the course anticipates that with the help of your course presenter and by negotiation with other participants, you will use the activities as a basis for helping you to determine and then to address your professional development needs and your own pathway through the course.

The use of a personal journal throughout the course is strongly recommended as a self-assessment tool, although you will not be required to submit journal entries for formal assessment. The essential idea is to use a journal as a learning tool. Many of the learning activities, accordingly, invite you to make notes on the readings or record the outcomes of discussions and reflections in your journal. In this way it will serve as a convenient device for sharing views with other participants or the course presenter, reviewing previous learning, drafting workshop presentations or formal assignments, capturing input from wider reading and so on. You may wish to extend the role of the journal so that it becomes a portfolio of your professional interests and development. In the current working environment where documentary evidence of professional competence and achievement is becoming increasingly important, your journal will have value as a personal record of your progress through the ALT course and of your professional growth in a larger sense.

Through a culminating Practical Project, the course gives you the opportunity to design, implement and evaluate a substantial unit of work for your own students, and to report on it in detail. The project should be informed by the critical reading, reflection and discussion that you will have completed through Modules 1, 2 and 3. As well as forming an integral part of the assessment, this project constitutes the major directional focus for the course as a whole.

Many writers whom you will encounter during the course emphasise the vital importance of understanding the context in which ALBE teaching and learning occur. In keeping with this key notion, the course presents you with the means of analysing a range of factors which are impacting on the field at the present time. The factors included do not constitute an exhaustive list. It is well understood that each institution or organisation, each workplace and each practitioner in the field recognises and responds to a range of considerations beyond those included in the course materials. Rather, the Project Team believed that the course dealt with the most significant forces affecting the areas covered by the three modules—significant at the time the final draft of the course was prepared (early 1995) and likely to remain so over the next few years. These include:

- the role of the Australian National Training Authority
- the *National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy*
- the *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*
- flexible delivery
- critical literacy
- systemic functional linguistics
- genre approaches to the teaching of literacy.

ALT provides you with frames of reference and focal points, and asks you to critique important aspects of the context in which you work and the implications they have for your practice and for your students' learning needs and goals. It thereby enables you to explore and articulate your own views about the attitudes towards ALBE learners (and assumptions about them and their learning) which underlie current policy; the dominant theoretical positions about literacy teaching and learning; and issues related to curriculum development, monitoring and assessment of learning, and evaluation of programs.

Adult
LITERACY
Teaching

A flexible delivery program

Module 1
Adult learners and learning

Module 1
Adult learners and learning

Outline of structure and requirements

Module purpose

This module aims to enhance participants' understanding of teaching and learning in adult contexts with special reference to adult literacy and basic education. The module assists participants to consolidate, clarify and articulate their own philosophical stance with regard to working in this field and to identify the implications of their philosophy for their teaching practice.

Nominal duration

20 – 25 hours

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisite modules.

Module contents

Unit 1 Contexts of adult learning
  Section A *Beliefs, principles and theories*
  Section B *The student*
  Section C *The national context*

Unit 2 Implications for practice

Assessment strategy

As set out in the Course Curriculum

Learning outcome details

It is strongly recommended that each learning outcome be the focus of a group discussion either face to face or via teleconferencing or video-conferencing.

Learning outcome 1

Participants will be able to present a clear rationale for ALBE practice, drawing on the theories covered in the program.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

1.1 summarise a number of key adult learning theories;

1.2 explain the most important adult learning principles and how they relate to ALBE clients.

Learning outcome 2

Participants will be able to describe the influence that major national factors have on ALBE and discuss their significance.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

2.1 describe the current key concepts driving national policy;

2.2 analyse some of the key issues affecting ALBE practice and practitioners.

Learning outcome 3

Participants will be able to analyse harmonies and contradictions between principles, beliefs and theory on the one hand and student needs, educational settings and teaching practices on the other.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

3.1 differentiate the expectations in practice between teacher, student and provider;

3.2 list the decisions they make in delivering a program and the factors influencing those decisions.

Conditions

Participants will explore and reflect upon current theories and issues affecting adult literacy and basic education, and their own professional practice, by

- reviewing the readings provided, with guidance from the learning activities suggested in the module;
- discussing their ideas and concerns with one or more fellow learners as far as possible and/or with the course presenter;
- recording their reflections, notes on readings completed, points raised in discussion etc in a journal.

Assessment methods

Assessment tasks and conditions should be negotiated by the course presenter with each participant.

Generally, a mix of journal entries (as self assessment), participation in group discussions and written tasks will be used.

Participants who elect for their Practical Project to be 100% of the formal assessment for Modules 1, 2 and 3, i.e. Option 1, will not have to write any other essay material.

Those who elect Options 2, 3, 4 or 5 should submit their written assessment tasks for Module 1 at an agreed time after the module is completed. (Options 1 to 5 are set out in the Course Curriculum, page 6.)

Essay-type alternatives are:

1. Option 2:
   An essay of about 1250 words on a major topic from the learning activities of Module 1, as negotiated with the course presenter. (Another similar essay will be required for Module 2.)

2. Option 3:
   An essay or paper of about 2500 words; the essay to be on a major topic from Module 1 (or Module 2, as chosen); the paper to be based on a presentation made to the participant's study group on an aspect of the learning activities for Module 1 (or Module 2, as chosen).

3. Options 4 and 5:
   Shorter essays(s) or paper(s) as negotiated for this module (or other modules, as chosen).

Participants must present written material in hard copy even if it is word-processed because of difficulties the presenter may encounter in accessing material form computer disks.

Participants who wish to include audio-tapes, video-tapes or computer disk material integrated with the presentation of their assessment tasks should discuss with the presenter any adjustments to be made to the length of their essays or papers.

Highly recommended resources

Bates S. (1994) 'A five-minute exploration of power', *Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education*. No. 25, pp. 3–4.

Beattie S. (1991) *Moving from Strength to Strength: A self paced professional development package for teachers of adult literacy and numeracy*. Faculty of Education, University of Technology, Sydney.

Brookfield S. (1986) *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Candy P. (1991) *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Flexible Delivery Working Party (1993) *A Guide to Implementing Flexible Delivery*. ANTA, South Brisbane.

Flexible Delivery Working Party (1992) *Flexible Delivery: A national framework for implementation in TAFE*. ANTA, South Brisbane.

Hill S. (1990) *Just Literacy! Break the Barriers: Case studies of adults learning to read and write*. SA Committee for International Literacy Year, Adelaide.

Joyce H. (1992) *Workplace Texts in the Language Classroom*. Curriculum Support Unit, NSW Adult Migrant English Service, Surry Hills, NSW.

MacKeracher D. (1989) 'Women and literacy' in M. Taylor & D. Draper (eds) *Adult Literacy Perspectives*. Culture Concepts, Toronto, pp. 377–86.

McCormack R. & Pancini G. (1992) *Learning to Learn: Introducing adults to the culture, contexts and conventions of knowledge: a guide for teachers*. Division of Further Education, Melbourne.

Manicom A. (1992) 'Feminist pedagogy: transformations, standpoints and politics', *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 365–389.

Murphy A. (1987) 'Is student-centred learning a form of tokenism?', *Viewpoints*, No. 7, May, pp. 23–25.

National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy. (1993) Adult Literacy Information Office, Sydney.

Schuttenberg E. & Tracey S. (1987) 'The role of the adult educator in fostering self-directed learning', *Lifelong Learning*, Vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 4–9.

Sexton M. (1980) 'Theories of adult learning', *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 3–14.

TAFE National Staff Development Committee. (1992) *Teaching and Learning: participants' resource package*. TNSDC, Sydney.

Suggested additional resources

Boomer G. (ed.) (1982) *Negotiating the Curriculum: Educating for the 21st century*. Ashton Scholastic, Sydney.

Boud D. & Griffin V. (eds) (1987) *Appreciating Adults Learning: From the learners' perspective*. Kogan Page, London.

Brookfield S. (1990) *The Skilful Teacher: On technique, trust and responsiveness in the classroom*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Cambourne B. (1990)*One Model of Learning* (video) Media Centre, Queensland Distance Education College, Brisbane.

Carmichael L., Schmidt N. and Wurzburg G. (1991) *Training and Education for the Next Century* (video) Sydney Technical College.

Centre for Applied Learning Systems. (1993) *Open Learning: A way to go* (video). Adelaide Institute of TAFE, SA.

Cornish S. and Tristram I. (1990) *Between the Lines* (television series). Adult Literacy Council, NSW.

Gallasch P. (1992) *Looking at Learning*. Tea Tree Gully Institute of TAFE, South Australia.

Gee J. (1990) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in discourses*. The Falmer Press, Hampshire.

Gehling J. and Murphy C. (1993) (compilation) *The Language and Structures of the National Training Reform Agenda*. Learning Systems and Resources Executive Committee, DETAFE, SA.

Goldman S. (1992) 'Good practice for flexible delivery', Module 2, *Open Learning and Flexible Delivery*. TAFE National Staff Development Committee.

Kelly A. (1989) 'Helping adult beginning readers to learn.' *Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, No. 3, pp. 12–13.

Knowles M. (1990) *The Adult Learner: A neglected species*. (4th edn). Gulf Publishing, Houston.

Langer J. (1987). 'A sociocognitive perspective on literacy,' in *Language, Literacy and Culture: Issues on society and schooling*. Ablex, pp. 1–20.

Lewis R. (1986). *The School's Guide to Open Learning*. National Extension College, Cambridge, UK.

Luke A. (1992) 'When basic skills and information processing just aren't enough: rethinking reading in new times.' *ACAL Conference Papers* Vol. 1, pp. 1–24.

McCormack R. & Pancini G. (1991) 'Becoming an active reader', *Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education,** No. 14, pp. 2–3.

Mitchell J. (1991) *An Introduction to Open Learning: Open learning staff development program*. Adelaide Institute of TAFE, SA.

National Staff Development Committee. (1994) 'Using technology', *Inservice Program for Adult Literacy and Basic Education Personnel*: Module 6, (book & video). NSDC, Chadstone, Vic.

'TAFE talk' from *AUSTAFE Forum/expo: Innovative learning systems* (audio tape). Copies from the Customised Training Unit, Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE, SA.

Tristram I. & Kebby H. (1990) *Fresh Start: Reading and writing help* (television series, book & audio cassette). ABC Enterprises, Crows Nest, NSW.

Willing K. (1988) *Learning Styles in Adult Migrant Education*. National Curriculum Resource Centre, Adult Migrant Education Program, Adelaide.

* In the text of the modules this journal, *Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, is referred to by its abbreviated name: *Good Practice*.

Module 1
Adult learners and learning

Introduction

> We teachers gain power by building theories about:
>
> Our actions, by examining them in ways that reveal the underlying patterns and the possibly unconscious motivations for them.
> Our intentions, by articulating and examining them.
> Our teaching, by exposing and examining the contradictions and harmonies between intention and action, i.e. by finding out more about what we are doing.
> Learning and teaching.
> Society and social change.
>
> Theory building calls us to articulate our experience, to reflect upon it, to listen to other people's experiences and to generalise from the basis of our own experience and that of others. '
>
> Learning after all, comes from people feeling enough discomfort for them to need to change their present level of knowledge, but not so much discomfort that they become paralysed.
>
> (Davis 1987, quoted in Beattie 1991, excerpts from pp. 5.9–5.11)

This module is organised around three significant elements which influence teaching practice in adult literacy and basic education (ALBE).

The teacher
  core values, background, theoretical position, methodology

The students
  who they are, why they are in the program, their learning styles

The vocational education and training context
  funding, policy and policy implementation, the economic climate

Unit 1 looks at some of the variables teachers take into account with regard to these elements.

Unit 2 explores the practice of teachers who are aware of these three broad elements, who juggle them, and make choices around how much control students have in the learning environment.

These core notions of the course as a whole build on, or are built on by both the Curriculum Areas and Program Development modules (Modules 2 and 3).

Unit 1
Contexts of adult learning

Section A
Beliefs, principles and theories

Before examining theories of learning, it is useful to think about learning experiences generally. What do you think of Brookfield's comment?

> If asked on their death beds to identify their most important learning experience, many people would probably speak of the insight and understanding of self that they had developed while trying to make sense of some calamitous event or unplanned experience. They would probably not single out some form of learning that had enabled them to perform a function better (important though this might be at different times).
>
> (Brookfield 1986, p. 213)

Learning activities

What is Learning?

1.1

Reflect briefly on your own learning. How do people go about learning? Share your reflections with a colleague or the course presenter.

Look forward to 1.2 and the questions it suggests for you to use with students.

1.2

Conduct one or more interviews along the following lines, preferably with a group of ALBE students. Summarise the results in your journal.

> Think of something you have learnt. You may decide to focus on a recent learning experience, or you may choose to remember some learning experience from the past.
> How did the learning occur? What was the process you went through?
> Recall your levels of comfort, anxiety, confidence and control as you went through this learning process.

Reflect on your experience.

Did the learning environment and other available resources support your needs?
- Were you satisfied with your achievement?
- Did you gain any new insights about yourself as a learner?

Did you consider this to be an example of
- 'real learning' or
- 'incidental learning'?

Now think of something you were unable to learn to your satisfaction.
- Identify the feelings you recall.
- Identify the factors (external and personal) that caused your failure.

Think of something you would like to learn but haven't tried yet.
- What factors have stopped you from trying?
- What factors would be most likely to ensure success?

Do you think men and women learn in different ways?

Do you believe people from different cultures learn in different ways?

Take the following view into consideration.

> Learning isn't something people usually talk about, yet it is something we do constantly. From birth onwards we look, listen, feel, touch, copy, speak - and learn in the process. In fact, it has been said that the learning we do from birth to five years is the most intensive and fastest learning we will ever do in our lives.
>
> And we continue this process, if more slowly! Learning is something we all do all the time - computing, driving, cooking, gardening, entertaining, using the phone are all skills we have learnt. Most people take this form of learning for granted, viewing it as something separate from 'real' learning (that which occurs formally in institutions).
>
> People naturally learn from one another. They like working together. And they bring different ideas and experiences.
>
> (Gallasch 1992, p. 20)

1.3

Discuss with a group of ALBE students what they think real learning is and record the results in your journal.

Principles and Beliefs about Adult Learning

Below is a series of extracts which describe frequently stated or implied principles and/or beliefs about adult learning.

1.4

Critique these principles or beliefs. What are they saying about the student's role, the teacher's role and how learning is constructed?

You may like to use the questions in 1.5 to assist in developing your critique.

Extract 1
The following excerpts are from the seven principles of learning expounded in the TNSDC manual, *Teaching and Learning: Participants' resources package* (1992), Module 2, Section 1.

Active learning - We learn by doing.
Students learn more quickly and effectively when they are actively involved in the learning process.

- Tell me and I will forget.
- Show me and I may understand.
- Involve me and I will surely learn.

Meaningful material
Students learn more effectively when they can relate new material to their existing knowledge. Many teachers plunge ahead from a starting point that many of the students have never reached and then proceed to teach the unknown by means of the incomprehensible.

Multi-sense learning
Learning methods which use two or more senses will be more effective than those which use only one sense.

- 83% of information is taken in through sight.
- 11% of information is taken in through hearing.

First and last impressions
Students have a tendency to recall best those things they have learnt first and last in a sequence. The first few minutes of a learning activity are crucial, particularly in the early stages of a course.

Practice and reinforcement
Learning is supported by frequent opportunities to practise and apply new skills and knowledge. Student motivation can be damaged through the application of skills which have not been practised and fully developed.

Feedback
Effective learning is encouraged when teachers and students share feedback with each other. Encouraging feedback is a key element in developing positive student-teacher relationships.

Reward
Learning which is rewarding is more likely to be retained. One thing you can be sure of - every student will be different and will seek rewards, both internal and external, to meet their needs.

Extract 2
Here is a list of beliefs about adult learning stated in *Moving from Strength to Strength.*

> Learning occurs when learners find the material immediately useful.
> Learning is fostered when a text is accessible (i.e. can be readily understood).
> Learning is enhanced when learners discover alternative views or a challenge to their ideas.
> Learning is more likely to occur when learners move from the known to the unknown.
> Learning is enhanced when learners are trusted to learn.
> Learning is more likely to occur when learners understand the purpose of what they are doing.
> Learning is fostered when learners are part of the structuring of the learning experience.
> (Beattie 1991, p. 3.6)

Extract 3
Six principles of effective practice in facilitating learning

> Participation in learning is voluntary; adults engage in learning as a result of their own volition. It may be that the circumstances prompting this learning are external to the learner (job loss, divorce, bereavement), but the decision to learn is the learner's. Hence, excluded are those settings in which adults are coerced, bullied, or intimidated into learning.
>
> Effective practice is characterised by a respect among participants for each other's self-worth. Foreign to facilitation are behaviours, practices, or statements that belittle others or that involve emotional or physical abuse. This does not mean that criticism should be absent from educational encounters. It does mean, though, that an attention to increasing adults' sense of self-worth underlies all facilitation efforts.
>
> Facilitation is collaborative. Facilitators and learners are engaged in a cooperative enterprise in which, at different times and for different purposes, leadership and

> facilitation roles will be assumed by different group members. This collaboration is seen in the diagnosis of needs in the setting of objectives, in curriculum development, in methodological aspects, and in generating evaluative criteria and indexes. This collaboration is also constant, so that the group process involves a continual renegotiation of activities … in which competing claims are explored, discussed, and negotiated.
>
> Praxis is placed at the heart of effective facilitation. Learners and facilitators are involved in a continual process of activity, reflection upon activity, collaborative analysis of activity, new activity, further reflection and collaborative analysis, and so on. 'Activity' can, of course, include cognitive activity; learning does not always require participants to 'do' something in the sense of performing clearly observable acts. Exploring a wholly new way of interpreting one's work, personal relationships, or political allegiances would be an example of activity in this sense.
>
> Facilitation aims to foster in adults a spirit of critical reflection. Through educational encounters, learners come to appreciate that values, beliefs, behaviour, and ideologies are culturally transmitted and that they are provisional and relative. This awareness that the supposed givens of work conduct, relationships, and political allegiances are, in fact, culturally constructed means that adults will come to question many aspects of their professional, personal, and political lives.
>
> The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults. Such adults will see themselves as proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds, and social circumstances rather than as reactive individuals, buffeted by uncontrollable forces of circumstance.
>
> (Brookfield 1986, pp. 9–11)

Extract 4

> Since we know that an individual's self-concept is a central factor in learning, we can assume that the manner in which learners describe themselves becomes a crucial element in how they go about learning.
>
> (MacKeracher 1989, p. 76)

Extract 5

In the A. J. A. Nelson address to the National ACAL Conference in 1992, Allan Luke argued that:

> Reading is a social practice, comprised of interpretive rules and events constructed and learned in institutions like schools and churches, families and workplaces. Implicit in ways of teaching reading are social theories, models of the social order, social power and social change, models of the institutional everyday life, models of worker/employer relationships and ultimately, models of what the literate worker and citizen should look like.
>
> (Luke 1992, pp. 3–4)

Extract 6

> I consider it an important quality or virtue to understand the impossible separation of teaching and learning. Teachers should be conscious each day that they are coming to school to learn and not just to teach. This way we are not just teachers but teacher learners. It is really impossible to teach without learning as well as learn without teaching. We cannot separate one from the other; we create a violence when we try
>
> Humility is an important virtue for a teacher … Humility accepts the needs to have to learn and relearn again and again, the humility to know with those we help to know … Humility implies understanding the pain of others, the feelings of others … [and starting] at the point at which the students are … Dialogue is not an empty instructional tactic, but a natural part of the process of knowing …

(Paolo Freire, *Language Arts* 62, 1 January 1985, pp. 5–11)

Extract 7

Ten principles that enhance adult learning

1. Adult learning is enhanced when learners perceive that the learning process and outcomes are to their own purposes.
2. Adult learning is enhanced in a group setting which allows for the interplay of ideas and hence the potential for 'building' on the combined resources of the group.
3. Adult learning is enhanced when learning is viewed as an evolutionary process which requires time and patience, and where one accepts that goals and directions that emerge may change as people become clearer about what it is they want to learn.
4. Adult learning is enhanced when learners are treated as self-directing, responsible people who are encouraged to take an active role in decision making, planning and implementation of learning activities. Such an approach assumes that adults have a rich accumulation of experiences which can be tapped in the learning process.
5. Adult learning is enhanced when learners are encouraged to trust themselves (including their emotional reactions), to draw from their experience as a source of knowledge and to integrate their personal meanings with external knowledge.
6. Adult learning is enhanced when the learning climate fosters self-esteem, interdependence, freedom of expression, acceptance of differences and freedom to make mistakes.
7. Adult learning is enhanced when evaluation of learning includes self-evaluation - that is, the learner's assessment of what he or she has learned - and feedback from others.
8. Adult learning is enhanced when people are encouraged to be active and to learn through doing, particularly when emphasis is placed on reflecting on the meaning of what people have experienced.
9. Adult learning is enhanced when it is recognised that some learning cannot be predicted or planned. Some goals therefore may initially be ambiguous.
10. Adult learning is enhanced when learners discover their preferred learning styles. As people become more aware of how they learn and become exposed to other ways of learning they can redefine and modify their own styles as they seek ways of becoming more competent and responsible learners.

(Heather McLean, quoted in Beattie 1991, Section 3, p. 3.11)

Extract 8

> Quite simply, where reading is conceived of as basic skills, whether decoding, word recognition, recall or even as 'meaning making', pragmatic questions about the strategic place and use of the text in a context or situation tend to be subordinated; and critical questions about the veracity, validity and authority of the text tend to be silenced. As an alternative, I would argue for a model of reading that enables one not only to decode and construct messages, but which makes explicit and overt the social relations of power around the text, and places squarely on the table the issue of who is trying to do what, to whom, with and through the text.
>
> (Luke 1992, p. 10)

Extract 9

> Just as I would be dismayed if a surgeon or mechanic denied his or her special expertise in the name of a spurious democracy, so I would feel cheated if, having enrolled in a course of instruction, the instructor suddenly denied that he or she had any special knowledge of the subject, and insisted that I had the ability (and indeed the responsibility) to discover things for myself, to plan my program of inquiry and to identify my learning goals.
>
> (Candy 1991, p. 69)

Extract 10

> Negotiation does not imply complete freedom for learners. teachers must control the process and ensure that a balance is achieved between the learners' needs and the integrity of the course. In particular, teachers' understandings of course content with its sequence should be bought to bear on the negotiation process, tempered with the aim of satisfying the needs of learners.
>
> (ANTA, *A Guide to Implementing Flexible Delivery* 1993, p. 108)

Extract 11

> Facilitators are professionally bound not always to take learners' expressions of learning needs and wants as the sole criteria for all curriculum development and instructional design. At times facilitators will be called upon to prompt adults to confront painful facts and realities in their personal and work lives and about the social structures in which their lives are rooted. To take learners' definitions of need as always determining appropriate practice is to cast the facilitator as a technician within a consumer mode. It is to remove from the facilitator all professional judgment and to turn him or her into a 'knee jerk' satisfier of consumer needs. Education thus becomes one giant department store in which facilitators are providers of whatever learners (consumers) believe will make them happy.
>
> (Brookfield 1986, p. 97)

Extract 12

> Feminist pedagogy is a pedagogy of liberation. 'Liberating education is not just a question of methods or methodologies, but it has a radically and fundamentally different relationship to knowledge and society' (Hoffman Nemiroff 1989, p. 7). Feminism 'necessitates not only the development of new knowledge but also new forms of relationships between people' (Schniedewind 1983, p 262). Feminist pedagogy concerns itself with the transformation both of relations among people in classrooms and of relations of power in the world at large.
>
> (Manicom 1992, p. 367)

Extract 13

> [Facilitation should involve] the progressive induction of the learner into the 'syntactic structures' of the field. It should encourage high level thinking about and questioning of the nature of knowledge claims in the field and ultimately it should strive for meta-knowledge. This involves deliberate strategies on the part of the teacher to teach not simply the content of the subject, but the process by which knowledge develops and is tested in that domain.
>
> (Candy 1991, p. 369)

1.5

Think about and/or discuss these questions and issues.

How is facilitating different from teaching? If teachers see their role as more of a facilitator, what does this involve?

There appear to be various misconceptions about the term 'facilitator', probably because it is a comparatively recent term.

Note your views in your journal.

Choose any two or three of the principles or beliefs that are particularly important to you and reflect on how they influence your methodology.

Discuss the six principles which Brookfield believes enhance adult learning (Extract 3).

Questions for discussion could include:
- Do you see any of these as being more crucial than others?
- Who sets the learning outcomes in this model?
- How 'free' do literacy students feel to make mistakes or accept differences?

Recollect and share a situation which highlighted the importance of one principle.

Take each of Beattie's beliefs and reframe it to focus on the impact on teachers, along the lines of the example below:

> Learning is enhanced when *teachers* allow alternative views or a challenge to their ideas.

Discuss the following questions.

- What are the implications of the Principles of Effective Practice for these clients:
  - people from a non-English speaking background?
  - adults with disabilities
  - women
  - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people?

  Would these principles continue to hold where adults are 'coerced' into training, e.g. job seekers, labour market training, workplace, rehabilitation.

  Who is being asked to take responsibility for successful learning in each of these extracts—the student, or the teacher?

  How do McLean's principles reflect the way that adult literacy students have been ill-served and excluded during initial schooling?

1.6

Identify the political perspectives in each extract, i.e. whose interests are served.

1.7

Draw up a list of adult learning principles which are of particular importance to you and which also relate to the specific needs of ALBE students, based on your understanding of the needs of adult learners and literacy students.

Record in your journal your key beliefs about adult learning as explicitly as you can at this stage.

Major Theories of Adult Learning - Overview

As you read about some of the major theories concerning adult learners, keep in mind your own beliefs about adult learning. A removable worksheet is provided at the end of this section (page 45) for you to use in processing the different theories and noting any similarities and differences (original from Beattie 1991, p. 3.10).

1.8

Complete the worksheet and then discuss your findings with your study group, with a colleague, e.g. by telephone, or with the course presenter.

Some questions to cover in the discussion could include:

- What are the key points of the different theories?
- What elements are common to them/different between them?
- Where do you draw the line between teacher and facilitator roles?
- Where do you draw the line for responsibility of learning between teachers and students?

If you wish to go deeper than the readings above, refer to the list of Suggested Additional Resources.

1.9

Read the extract from Boud contained in Beattie (1991, pp. 3.10–3.16).

Look critically at the way the word 'freedom' is used.

This extract outlines briefly four distinct ways of framing adult education practice, summarised here:

Training and efficiency in learning
- teaching and learning are seen as a form of technology
- freedom from distraction to learn

Self directed learning and the androgogy school
- unique goals of individuals are central in the learning process, including the provision of supportive structures
- freedom as learners

Learner-centred education and the humanistic educators
- facilitator adopts a non-directive role with affective goals emphasised
- freedom to learn

Critical pedagogy and social action
- a major goal is collective and social action
- freedom through learning

Locate an exponent of each of these different theoretical positions, if you have ready access to resources through a library or other means. Read more widely among the available texts and note your own views and reflections in your journal.

Reflect back on the 13 extracts presented earlier and place each into whichever of Boud's categories for framing adult education practice you consider the most fitting and discuss your placement with others.

A Different Perspective

1.10

Consider carefully the views of the feminist Dorothy MacKeracher (refer to Reading 1A), who suggests that men and women require different types of programs, or at least some different elements within a program.

Consider your experience in the ALBE field.

> How has the gendered nature of learning emerged in your teaching/learning activities?
>
> Have gender issues been raised for discussion at your workplace and
> - if so, in what ways?
> - if not, why do you think they haven't?

Refer to the article 'Theories of Adult Education' (Sexton 1980) contained in Reading 1B.

> Sexton summarises and compares:
> - Carl Roger's theory of student-centred learning
> - Malcolm Knowles andragogical theory of adult learning
> - Bruner's theory of instruction
> - Gagné and the information processing theories and
> - Skinner's behaviourist theory.
>
> *This is done in the context of exploring the hypothesis that there are no fundamental differences between how adults learn and how children learn, and therefore the approach should be the same'.*

Compare Sexton's writing with MacKeracher's and record your thoughts in your journal or discuss them with a colleague.

	CONCEPTION OF ADULT LEARNING			
	Training and efficiency in learning (from programmed learning)	*Self-directed learning and the androgogy school*	*Learner-centred education*	*Critical pedagogy and social action*
How learning is fostered				
Facilitator roles and strategies				
Student roles and actions				
Appropriate contexts				

ASPECTS OF FOUR MAJOR TRADITIONS OF ADULT LEARNING
(Beattie 1991, p. 3.10)

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Unit 1
Contexts of adult learning

Section B
The students

It is not possible to discuss what we do in teaching situations without thinking about the student. Obviously who they are, why they are there, what they are requiring, their beliefs, their backgrounds and experiences as well as the make up of a student group impact on how successful you may feel as a teacher/facilitator.

> Once we realise that every learning group contains a configuration of idiosyncratic personalities, all with differing past experiences and current orientations, all at different levels of readiness for learning, and all possessing individually developed learning styles, we will become extremely wary of prescribing any standardised approach to facilitating learning. Neat practice injunctions (whether pedagogical or andragogical) are appealing for their apparent simplicity and reliability. The act of facilitating learning, however, is one that is sufficiently complex and challenging as to make us suspicious of any prepackaged collections of practice injunctions.
>
> (Brookfield 1986 p. 122)

Initial Reflections

1.11

Think back to a group of ALBE students you felt you were less successful with and compare that with a group that for you 'came together'. What were the different factors at play? Why was one successful and the other less so?

Keeping in mind your reflections on the needs of adult learners generally, focus now on literacy students and identify
- who they are
- what their backgrounds are
- why they come and
- the social contexts for their learning.

What do we find out about their specific needs and the barriers to learning they have experienced? There is a wealth of materials on which to draw, including your own experience.

1.12

Read over some profiles of students from institutional records to which you have confidential access, e.g. prisoners, 'at risk' youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Record in your journal your impressions as you read the profiles and your responses to the following questions and activities.

Brainstorm the reasons why these students have not developed an adequate literacy level for their needs.

- Have inadequate literacy levels been defined?
  If so,
  - how and
  - by whom?
- See if any patterns emerge, e.g. causes based on
  - school absences
  - high family mobility
  - illness etc.
- Does class, ethnicity, culture or gender influence these patterns?
- Explore the effect that inadequate literacy has had on their lives.
- Explore the assumptions held by teachers and the wider community.
- How do these reasons continue to impact on ALBE students?
- How homogeneous are their situations?

Student Profiles and Case Studies

1.13

Record responses to the following questions in your journal.

- How useful do you find student profiles in developing programs for students?

- What information do you include in a profile? How do you deal with the issue of confidentiality?

Choose two student profiles as case studies. From these, what did you learn about barriers to learning these students have experienced and their present needs?

Plan how you would try to meet some of these needs in the first few sessions and record your plans in the journal.

Case Study of an Aboriginal Learner

1.14

Read the story of Desmond, an Aboriginal 'street kid', who later completed an apprenticeship.

Record in your journal the issues raised by Desmond's experience.

> The story is recounted in Hill (1990) and reproduced in Reading 1C.
>
> As an alternative or additional activity, you might like to read one or more of the other ten stories contained in Hill's study. Literacy issues and strategies which are listed at the end of each story provide excellent stimulus for reflection and discussion.

Barriers and Strategies

1.15

Watch one or two videos from the ABC *Fresh Start* or *Between the Lines* series and use the experience as a basis for a discussion with your study group or a colleague about barriers to learning and strategies for overcoming them.

> Look at attitudes, barriers, fear of failure etc on the part of students and teachers.
>
> - What barriers did the students encounter and what were their fears?
> - Were there any examples of fear of failure?
> - What coping strategies have they developed?
> - Why and how did they decide to do something about developing their literacy skills?

1.16

Consider whether you agree with the notion that examining the politics of teachers and schools must be an essential part of looking at the students?

1.17

Choose two examples from your own experience of students from an NESB or Aboriginal background. Explore their cultural backgrounds and the ways in which their values and needs may be different from those of 'mainstream' students by considering the following sort of questions.

> What were their experiences as literacy students? Did they analyse their own literacy problems? Did they identify steps they felt they needed to take to achieve their goals?
>
> Do cultural considerations affect our provision and if so, by how much and in what ways?
>
> Do political considerations affect our provision and if so, by how much and in what ways?

Labelling Students

1.18

Discuss the following statements relating to the labelling of students, with a group of ALBE practitioners.

> Teachers may carry a set of assumptions about what to expect from a student and which teaching strategies are appropriate. Labels offer a ready made andragogical context, e.g. 'He's a 40 year old Turkish man who wants to get work as a taxi driver.'
>
> Lack of literacy is seen as a constraint to economic re-structuring through inhibiting occupational mobility. The less literate are threatened by technological redundancy. Retraining requires literacy. Labelling students helps determine priorities and resource allocation.
>
> (quoted in *Adult Literacy Teaching* 1991, p. 37)

1.19

Consider the issue of labelling, in your study group or in discussion with a colleague or the course presenter.

> How might it manifest itself in the following situations: counselling, student selection, CES referrals, interviews, assessment and on-the-job training?

Different Contexts

1.20

Choose an ALBE program that is different from yours and try to find out more about its client group, their learning context and the programs delivered, e.g. prisons, on-the-job training, workplace or community houses.

Perhaps your supervisor or the presenter could help to
- organise a visit or an exchange visit
- invite guest presenters to the study group or
- arrange to view videos.

Learning Styles

Accommodating learning styles is another important facet of meeting students' needs. The literature ranges widely, as the following two excerpts show.

Excerpt 1
From Ken Willing (1988) *Learning Styles in Adult Migrant Education.*

> 'Learning style' refers to any individual learner's natural, habitual and preferred ways of learning …
>
> The causative elements behind a person's fundamental pattern of preferences in this area of behaviour are the following:
> the individual's innate psychological and cognitive make up;
> particular upbringing and socio-cultural background;
> schooling in general;
> previous educational experiences in the particular subject matter in question, and the person's perceptions of her defects and weak points, as well as strengths and talents.
>
> (Willing 1988, p. 1 & p. 6)

Putting together all these multiple ingredients and discerning a distinctive learning style may seem an impossible task, but Willing argues that 'types' can be identified, that catering for these different learning modalities does have distinct educational advantages and finally, that teachers tend to teach with one learning style in mind as basic, whereas several different ways of learning are now held to be equally valid.

Excerpt 2
From 'Good practice for flexible delivery', Module 2 of the National Staff Development Committee's program, *Open Learning and Flexible Delivery.*

> We can cater for different learning styles by providing learners with as wide a range of resources as possible. Printed materials such as information sheets, texts and study guides, are used widely in the delivery of courses. Many learners work well with print-based material: they can skim it, note it, refer back to it, add comments to it and underline sections.
>
> For some learners however printed materials can be a barrier to learning. So to provide for different learning styles attempts should be made to incorporate other resources. These additional resources can be designed for use in your program on the basis of their effectiveness in achieving the learning outcomes.
>
> The range of resources could include:
>
> - audio tapes
> - video tapes
> - work-based visits and demonstrations
> - graphics
> - human resources-experts from the workplace, TAFE staff, other learners
> - computer-based learning activities.
>
> (Goldman 1992, p. 46)

This has an entirely different focus. Willing's psycho-cognitive dimension is not mentioned. Providing a wide range of resources is seen as the way to cater for different learning styles However, the same publication does go on to recognise the importance of providing opportunities for 'affiliation' in catering for learners' needs.

> The term 'affiliation' refers to the need for learners to work with others during the learning process and for some learners this is their preferred learning style. When we develop flexible delivery approaches to provide access for learners we need to also include affiliation opportunities in our programs.
>
> Learners can satisfy some aspects of this need for affiliation through contact with a range of staff who can cater for many of their learning needs. Sometimes this contact will be one-to-one:
>
> - talking to a support person about career options
> - checking a draft of written work with a tutor
> - asking for results information from an administration officer
> - searching for resources with a library staff member.
>
> At other times learners will interact with staff in groups of various sizes, from the large lecture group to a small study group. These group activities also provide learners with contact with other learners. This contact with other learners is an important part of the affiliation process. The learner is able to make sense of progress with the course by having an opportunity to talk with other learners. Common problems can be identified, resources, ideas and approaches can be discussed and shared …
>
> And these affiliation opportunities cater for the 'socialising' needs of many learners.
>
> Ultimately what counts is that both learners and facilitators/teachers recognise that there are different teaching and learning styles and that they endeavour to accommodate and match these where possible.
>
> (Goldman 1992, pp. 46–47)

1.21

Record the publication details in your journal if you know of any other significant publications on learning styles. Write an abstract describing one or more of them.

1.22

Discuss the issues and concerns that arise from the extracts above, or from your reading, with a colleague or your group. Record key points in your journal.

Learning Style Inventories

1.23

Study the area of learning styles further, using one or more of these suggestions:

- exploring study skills texts for information on learning styles
- evaluating the usefulness of a learning style inventory for yourself, as a learner
- developing a learning style inventory that could be useful for ALBE learners.

Accommodating Learning Styles

> Once we realise that every learning group contains a configuration of idiosyncratic personalities, all with differing past experiences and current orientations, all at different levels of readiness for learning, and all possessing individually developed learning styles, we will become extremely wary of prescribing any standardised approach to facilitating learning.
>
> (Brookfield 1986 p. 122).

This quotation, which was used earlier in the first paragraph of this section, does not mention the power differential that exists between a facilitator and a student or a student and a student, and how that affects the success of the learning experience.

1.24

Consider the extent to which the different learning styles of individual members of a group of learners can be realistically identified and catered for, in the light of Brookfield's comment.

Unit 1
Contexts of adult learning

Section C
The national context

External political agendas expressed through policies and funding arrangements are having a significant impact on the delivery of ALBE programs. Teachers are increasingly having to grapple with changing roles and expectations, in a rapidly shifting environment.

It is important that practitioners understand what has driven, and continues to drive, the radical and fundamental changes taking place in vocational education and training across Australia. Only then can we respond creatively and effectively to the demands these place on the delivery of language, literacy and numeracy education. As you continue to examine what factors influence your teaching practice and articulate what you do and why, discuss with your colleagues the importance and value of these national agendas and the degree to which they enhance or detract from the task as you see it.

The National Training Reform Agenda

The National Training Reform Agenda comes to us out of a series of critical reports, usually known by the name of the person who convened the committee producing the report. Thus there are reports by Deveson, Finn, Mayer, Rumsey and Carmichael. In essence these reports all move us towards:

- *a national approach to skill formation (a term with wider connotations than training)*
- *the introduction of competency based training*
- *a national approach to standards (the Australian Standards Framework of 8 levels)*
- *the provision of multiple entry and exit points*
- *recognition of prior learning*
- *flexible delivery, including on-the-job and off-the-job training*
- *the combining of TAFE and non-TAFE programs into the national Vocational Education and Training sector (NVETS)*
- *customising of courses*
- *facilitating a range of key competencies*
- *the registration of training providers*
- *an increase in post-compulsory education with a guarantee of employment or a place in school or in the tertiary sector for every young person*
- *improved pathways from school to VET or higher education*

- *increased involvement of industry in describing the level of competencies and in meeting the cost of education and training*
- *enhancing the status of VET and providing new options for the funding of TAFE*
- *reform of Industry Training Boards*
- *industry plans for work-based training.*

1.25

Look critically at the above list and, using your journal, draw out some of the implicit, unaddressed industrial issues and their implications for your practice.

Ask yourself the following questions.
- What outcomes does your workplace expect you to achieve?
- How are these outcomes measured?
- How does your program get its funding? (or where does your remuneration come from?)
- Are you expected to attract external funding for your program?

The Role of ANTA

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) has been established as a result of agreements between the states and territories and the Commonwealth to be the vehicle for the planning and funding of the national vocational education and training system (NVETS).

Four main points about ANTA are highly relevant to the ALBE field.

1. *National goals, objectives and priorities for VET are identified as part of an agreed, long term, broad policy framework and, a national strategic plan is to be developed from this framework.*

2. *States and territories will continue to operate their own VET systems, exercising policy and planning functions but all funding to them will flow from ANTA.*

3. *Each state and territory is required to designate a State Training Authority and to develop a training profile.*

4. *ANTA establishes key priorities on an annual basis.*
   The priorities set for 1995 were:
   - *to build a client focused culture*
   - *to create and promote opportunities for lifelong learning*
   - *to advance a national identity for the VET system and*
   - *to reward innovation and best practice.*

1.26

Identify the main elements of the structure and organisation which have evolved in your state or territory to develop policy, to monitor program implementation, to structure delivery and allocate funding to the vocational education and training sector in general, and to the ALBE field in particular.

Describe briefly in your journal where your own workplace and institution fit into the larger state or territory picture, after discussion in your study group or with a colleague or the course presenter.

National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy

The contemporary needs of the vocational education and training sector are being addressed increasingly by public and private providers. In this diverse training environment the establishment of common policy and agreed principles of good practice are fundamental to the achievement of the national training reform agenda. There is also a commitment to flexible delivery, and to the sharing of resources and ideas among training systems and providers.

This climate has given rise to the National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy *(1993) and then to national strategies in designated areas aimed at advancing the purposes of NCAELLS and extending its implementation to:*

- *flexible delivery of adult literacy, English as a second language and numeracy programs (1995)*
- *implementation plan for professional development of adult literacy (including numeracy) and adult ESL personnel (1996)*
- *development of an evaluation plan for the provision of adult literacy and ESL (1996)*
- *specifications for the development of an integrated national research strategy (1996)*
- *implementation plan for adult literacy and ESL curriculum (1996/97).*

1.27

Consider the implications of these changes for the ALBE field in general and for your practice and professional development in particular.

Who are the likely winners and losers?

How might the changes affect resources and resourcing?

The National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy reflects, pre-eminently, the foundations of policy which underpin current planning of national strategies for the delivery of adult language, literacy and numeracy programs.

The NCAELLS advocates major changes for the ALBE field, including:

- *working from competency based, nationally accredited and modular curricula that provide articulated pathways*
- *delivering language, literacy and numeracy in a range of possibly new situations such as on-the-job training and workplace sites*
- *becoming pro-active, liaising with vocational programs to deliver language, literacy and numeracy where appropriate*
- *combining ESL and literacy methodologies where appropriate*
- *developing closer links with community based programs*
- *operating in a diverse training environment which will include direct competition with all providers for funding*
- *teaching in full time literacy courses*
- *exploring more flexible delivery modes and the use of communication technology*
- *demonstrating cost effectiveness and high productivity.*

The NCAELL Strategy also includes a rationale and covers six main areas for action. Excerpts are included here to provide a brief overview.

The Rationale

The levels and types of English language and literacy required in modern Australian society have increased dramatically. Economic restructuring has placed heavy demands on skills and on education and training programs to develop those skills. English language and literacy is fundamental to the whole of the education and training effort. (p. 2)

Six Areas for Action

1 **Setting the Directions**
The development of more effective English language and literacy skills is an essential component of workplace reform, an integral part of the response to unemployment and a key element of the agenda to improve the skills base of Australia. (p. 4)

2 **Diversifying and expanding the provision of English language and literacy programs**
In order to meet Goal 1 of the ALLP it will be necessary to diversify, expand and reshape existing provision. This will involve stringent priority setting and cooperative endeavour between commonwealth and states. It will also involve developing alternative learning methodologies and modes of delivery. (p. 6)

3 **Widening the resource base**
In order to meet Goal 1 of the ALLP it will be necessary to expand the government allocation of resources and to increase the resources from other sources. (p. 7)

4 **Ensuring equitable access**
The development of English language and literacy programs will enhance opportunities for many Australians who have been traditionally under-represented in education and training to gain access to that education and training. (p. 8)

5 **Ensuring High Quality Outcomes**
The development and implementation of a competency-based vocational education and training system is a nationally agreed goal and should be considered in the context also of English language and literacy provision. Language and literacy competencies for teachers, tutors and trainers need to be made explicit. (p. 10)

6 **Demonstrating Effectiveness and Value for Money**
Nationally agreed performance indicators are an essential first step in measuring effectiveness and efficiency. The open competitive market requires formal mechanisms for funding against these indicators and close monitoring of program outcomes.
Competence in English language and literacy is vital to successful vocational education and training. (p. 12)

1.28

Read the *National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy*, a copy of which should be available in your workplace.

1.29

Discuss these questions with your study group, a colleague and/or the presenter.

Do the six areas of action sit well with social, economic, industrial and political realities?

What impact are funding sources, policies and arrangements having on the implementation of the NCAELLS?

Are the national policies embodied in the NCAELLS having an impact on your own institution and workplace?

1.30

Choose one of the following questions about the NCAELLS for discussion.

What criteria would you think essential when preparing a training program to assist vocational teachers in writing integrated curriculum? (Objective 5.3)

What steps could be taken to help 'develop, diversify and expand the range of less formal provision by government and community based providers' in your region? (Strategy 2.1) Does this strategy need expanding?
What criteria would you suggest to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of assessment and provision in programs provided by public tender? (Objective 6.4)

This question is more thoroughly examined in Module 3.

In your area how could workplace provision be increased in accordance with industry/enterprise requirements? (Strategy 2.1)

If you know of a group which has specific difficulties in gaining access to English language and literacy services, what strategies would you use to increase their participation? (Strategy 4.1)

The National Framework of AELLN Competence

The National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence *is a central contemporary reference for the adult literacy and basic education field. It already guides and informs both curriculum and professional development, and it provides the founaation for the developing National Reporting System. You will therefore need to be familiar with the elements of the Framework. A copy should be available in your workplace or institution, or through the course presenter. The following extract describes the approach taken by authors of the Framework.*

> **Introducing the Framework**
>
> **What is its basis?**
>
> Language, literacy and numeracy are central elements of competence for work and social activity. They are best taught, learned and assessed where they occur, through activities in social contexts. That maxim is the foundation of this Framework.
>
> This document deliberately uses the term 'competence' instead of 'competency' which has commonly featured in recent literature on adult education and workplace training. The shared characteristic of some recent reports, scales and frameworks is to define 'competency' without reference to either the significance and impact of specific social contexts or any overarching framework.
>
> Competence requires a connection of performance and knowledge and skills, coordinated in such a way as to achieve social goals in particular contexts. People act on the basis of what they know to realise and transform their knowledge through performance. While knowledge and skills are products of formal education, training and study, they are also the products of life experience. This experience is shaped by the complexities of culture. Throughout this document the use of the term culture refers to differences that arise from Aboriginal, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic background. These difference are neither static nor uniform, but varied, multi-layered and dynamic. Constellations of differences in the life experiences of adult learners produce distinctive ways of knowing and doing. Since competence is always context-specific it needs to allow for cultural diversity in the way that it is determined. This Framework has developed a notion of competence that recognises and values cultural differences in performance.

> The competence statements in the Framework have been selected to reflect not only the social character of language, literacy and numeracy, but also contemporary changes in the structure of work, communication and technologies, and the evident cultural diversity of our society. As a consequence, they have been pitched at a level of generality which can encompass the diverse backgrounds, needs and resources of learners and workers, educators and trainers and the various educational, training and community contexts in which these people live and work.
>
> **The Framework is not a specific curriculum or assessment program**. It is not a prescription for a uniform curriculum. It does not dictate use of any particular teaching or learning methodology, nor does it derive from any single theoretical or linguistic origin, but from the pooling of a wide range of academic, practical and community expertise and advice.
>
> (*National Framework of AELLN Competence* 1994, p. 5)

1.31

Record in your journal your initial reactions to the NFAELLNC and make them the basis for contributing to a discussion with study partners or colleagues about the principles underlying the *Framework*, either in a seminar or by a teleconference.

1.32

Observe the ways and the extent to which the principles of the *Framework* are being followed in your institution and your workplace.

What positive responses have you observed?

What limiting factors are you aware of? Can these be obviated and if so, how?

1.33

Consider what links exist between the Framework and the *National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy*.

Alternatively:

Line up your understanding of the purposes of the *Framework* with the purposes of other developments in the changing national context.

1.34

Note in your journal the effects that application of the Framework is having or is likely to have on your own teaching practice and relationships with students.

Flexible Delivery

Full-scale commitment to flexible delivery in the current meaning of the term was made first of all in the TAFE system. In November 1992, the National Committee of Chief Executives of TAFE endorsed ***Flexible Delivery: A National Framework for Implementation in TAFE.*** *This report was prepared by the nationally representative Flexible Delivery Working Party (now a sub-committee of ANTA) with the active support of DEET. The report has resulted in acceptance of the principles of flexible delivery across the national VET sector.*

Guidelines, models, exemplars and other widely distributed publications by the Flexible Delivery Working Party define, illustrate and promote a comprehensive system of principles, policies, methodological approaches, modes of presentation, venues and facilities for learning, technologies, administrative procedures and student services. They are all designed to provide learner-centred training and further education and to maximise access to it.

For the ALBE field, implementation of flexible delivery, as a total system, recognises and builds on the long-standing commitment of the field to the ideals and practices of open learning: negotiated curriculum, individualised teaching, self-paced resource materials, off-campus learning arrangements and so on. However, it also encourages clients and potential clients to have far greater expectations of what institutions will provide. This places far more substantial obligations on practitioners and managers to meet those expectations.

The Flexible Delivery Working Party has set out the main features of the system.

> **What is flexible delivery?**
> Flexible delivery is an approach to vocational education and training which allows for the adoption of a range of learning strategies in a variety of learning environments to cater for differences in learning styles, learning interests and needs, and variations in learning opportunities.
>
> **Flexible delivery is characterised by:**
> - flexibility in terms of entry, course components, modes of learning and points of exit;
> - learner control and choice regarding the content, sequence, time, place and method of learning;
> - appropriate learner support systems;
> - the application of learning technologies where appropriate;
> - access to information on courses and services;
> - access to appropriate learning resources, and
> - flexible assessment procedures.
>
> **Flexible delivery finds expression in many ways including:**
> - the delivery of learning at a variety of locations including the workplace, the community or neighbourhood and the home;
> - resource-based learning with tutorial support;
> - the application of technology to enhance delivery or improve access opportunities and

- the extension of education opportunities through access programs, literacy programs, second and third chance opportunities for obtaining qualifications and bridging courses.

There are two common themes in all definitions of flexible delivery:

1 Flexible delivery is intended to increase access to training and education.
2 Flexible delivery is learner-centred.

Access refers to making education and training available to the learner at times and in locations that suit the individual or industry group.

A learner-centred approach to education and training is one which encourages a range of learning strategies in a variety of learning environments, in order to cater for individual differences in learning styles, interests and needs.

Focus on the learner

Paramount to flexible delivery is a focus on the learner. All planning and decision making in a flexible delivery system are based on removing impediments to meeting the needs of learners and optimising the learning process.

In TAFE, for example, this means taking a close look at the infrastructure built around personnel and course requirements, and questioning the basis for these. In particular, it means examining assumptions about structures and arrangements that are based on the historical view of teaching as a classroom-based, time-served activity.

(*Guide to Implementing Flexible Delivery*, p. 3)

1.35

Reflect on the following:

In what ways is flexible delivery being implemented in your own workplace and the wider institution to which it belongs?

What difficulties related to implementing flexible delivery are confronting

- current learners and potential clients
- practitioners and coordinators
- service and support personnel and administrators?

1.36

Identify some of the implications—for your own practice—of the national, state/territory and institutional moves to implement flexible delivery.

1.37

Examine the issues and assumptions that underlie access to technology such as 'new voices', texts, software, hardware and other and equipment.

What social justice or other implications are there for students who want to, or are required to access literacy and numeracy courses through technology?

Unit 2
Implications for practice

Our teaching practice is a constant balancing act which juggles the frequently conflicting requirements of the system, student and teacher. This second unit of the Adult Learners and Learning module challenges you to be explicit about how you do the balancing.

As you work through this last part of the module, look back over the readings you have completed and the reflections you have already made during the course. This unit provides you with an opportunity to draw some threads together.

In particular, you will be stimulated to think about the impact which everything that is happening in the ALBE field is having, will have, or should have on teaching and learning practice.

Grounding Practice in Theory

1.38

Reflect on the following quotation which you have seen already as the head-note for the module as a whole.

> We teachers gain power by building theories about:
>
> Our actions, by examining them in ways that reveal the underlying patterns and the possibly unconscious motivations for them.
>
> Our intentions, by articulating and examining them.
>
> Our teaching, by exposing and examining the contradictions and harmonies between intention and action, i.e. by finding out more about what we are doing.
>
> Learning and teaching.
>
> Society and social change.
>
> Theory building calls us to articulate our experience, to reflect upon it, to listen to other people's experiences and to generalise from the basis of our own experience and that of others.
>
> (Davis 1987 quoted in Beattie 1991, excerpts from p. 5.9–5.11)

Note your thoughts and feelings in your journal.

Discuss Christine Davis's view with colleagues in terms of the questions posed below and any others that occur to you.

Why do you make the decisions you make and what impact do your decisions have on your students and the program?

What contradictions and harmonies do you juggle?

Should the theories which an individual teacher works from be compatible with other theories which are
- widely accepted in academic circles and/or
- generally informing the practice of ALBE personnel?

What risks are there in teachers formulating their 'own' theories?

1.39

Read and reflect on Schuttenburg and Tracey's model of the changing role of the teacher/facilitator contained in Reading 1D.

Briefly, the model identifies three stages.

1 **Leader/director** who describes the changes required for a learner-centred approach, including the desired outcomes and changing roles and expectations of both teacher and learner in a period of induction and transition.

2 **Collaborator/coach** who sits alongside, instructing in and discussing the process of learning while facilitating and encouraging interaction with others in the group, where there is one.

3 **Colleague/co-learner** who shares their own process of learning and who models learner control, demonstrating a willingness to take risks and accept responsibility. At this level, there is internalisation of the learners' values with perceptions of themselves changing and becoming more proactive, enabled and/or allowed to take initiative for their learning and to create change their lives.

Decide where you position yourself in these three stages.

Do you see yourself as wearing all three hats in different situations?

It is implied that there should be a progression from stage 1 to stage 3. To what extent do you agree with this?

What roles may have been overlooked in the Schuttenburg & Tracey model?

For example, where is the role of 'teacher' as the term is generally understood? Is it present in all three stages?

Identifying Key Concerns

1.40

Discuss these three questions.

1 What is meant by 'student-centred'?

2 Is it possible to be student-centred to the extent of sharing with students decisions about their goals, progress and pathways?

3 Is this framework out of date?

Take into consideration views and ideas you have already encountered during the course, and echoes from major concepts and theories about adult learners and learning.

Examples

1 The current definition of flexible delivery and its implications

2 Brookfield's notion of a 'transactional encounter': continually helping learners negotiate their learning, yet always keeping control over the curriculum and assessment

3 Candy's view of learner control

> if implemented fully, learner control represents *a fundamental shift in the balance of power and locus of control* and leads inevitably and inescapably towards a radically altered role for both the learner and the teacher.
>
> ...simply individualising or even personalising a program of instruction is not synonymous with learner control ... nor is simply granting some degree of flexibility in pacing, sequencing or even methodology while still retaining for the instructor the major prerogatives of determining objectives and assessing learning outcomes.

(Candy pp. 211, 206, italics added.)

1.41

Assess how the notions of learner control, as presented by Candy in the extract above, fit the situation where a student is required to attend a program to continue receiving benefits.

Student-Centred Learning

1.42

Read Murphy's article in the Readings. (See Reading 1D.)

Discuss your responses to it with colleagues or your study group.

As the following brief extracts show, the article challenges any complacency practitioners may feel about their commitment to student-centred learning.

> Uneasy discussions with colleagues and a growing awareness of the understandings emerging through innovative practice and recent research or work in progress led me to recognise and reassess the limited notion of student-centred learning that I have employed while 'getting the job done' in an increasingly circumscribed environment.
>
> It is impossible to write about student-centred learning solely in the context of the classroom because styles of courses, classes and resources are determined by wider institutional, financial and political constraints beyond the immediate control of tutors and students.
>
> (Murphy, pp. 24–25)

1.43

Consider the following propositions about four conditions which determine effective learner-centredness.

> Ultimately, the level of student- or learner-centredness achieved will depend on:
>
> - one's personal interpretation of the term;
> - the level of comfort experienced in relinquishing degrees of control;
> - one's skill in negotiating with learners;
> - the degree to which the context or environment supports the philosophy by providing such things as resources, including learning packages, funding, and support services.

Make notes in your journal about the relative ranking you attach to the four factors mentioned—and the reasons for your rankings—in terms of your own experience.

Record also what are the external circumstances or conditions affecting realisation of learner-centredness in your own workplace and in the situations of your students.

What can or should be done to make things better?

Add other factors or conditions to the list above, if you consider that any others are important.

Learner Dependence

In attempting to explain possible negative reactions by students to an increasing level of independence, Candy explores four notions.

> 1. A preference for directed instruction. Some people simply prefer to be taught and their legitimate choice must be respected.
> 2. Learned helplessness from years in earlier educational systems which created in learners the belief that they are incapable of independent initiative and the only way they can 'learn' is to be 'taught.'
> 3. Personal learning myths and beliefs about their learning abilities - eg. I can only study in complete silence/I cannot work without the radio on.
> 4. Adapting to the instructional situation in which they have 'deliberately acquiesced and adjusted themselves to the implicit requirements for success in the formal system.' Learners become adept at sussing out the dissonance between the rhetoric and the practice.
>
> (Candy 1991, pp. 373–83)

1.44

Select **one** of the following three tasks:

Comment in your journal on any of these four notions in the light of your own experience.

or

Choose one or two of the statements and explore strategies that could be used to increase a sense of learner independence.

or

List other possible explanations for students not becoming independent.

Identifying Roles and Expectations

1.45

Think about how you see your role and what expectations you have of learners.

Identify in particular, the ways in which students can safely do the following:

- critique teachers' attitudes
- require teachers to make their values explicit
- voice their expectations of teachers
- evaluate teachers' performance
- ascertain teachers' learning outcomes.

Take into account your own experience and your reflections on the material contained in this unit.

You may find it useful to refer to the tutor checklists contained in pp. 133–137 of the *Guide to Implementing Flexible Delivery*.

Negotiation

The first issue of ***Good Practice*** *contains several very useful articles on student-centred learning, with a focus on negotiation. For example, Jo Black writes, in 'Why negotiate':*

> **What can be negotiated ?**
>
> Total teacher control of <——————————>Total student control of
> the learning environment the learning environment
>
> Looking at this continuum we are aiming for some sort of mid point. We can and do move along the continuum depending on the situation, and the degree to which we and the students have learnt to share power.
>
> We need to think about what can be negotiated comfortably and be honest about things that can't be negotiated. We need to not only know what we're teaching but why we're teaching it and to constantly test our beliefs.
>
> (*Good Practice* No. 1, 1988, p.2)

Garth Boomer has pointed out that:

> negotiation involves making explicit and then confronting the constraints of the learning context and the non-negotiable requirements that apply.
>
> (Boomer, quoted in Beattie 1991, p. 6.6)

1.46

Distinguish what you see as the 'non-negotiable requirements that apply'.

Focus on Teaching Practices

Candy quotes Biggs (1986, p. 142) as noting that learners:

> require the opportunity to talk about their learning processes in a language distinct from that used to talk about the content of learning ...
>
> Providing learning situations in which this may happen is one of the learning challenges confronting those educators who wish to enhance the capacity for informed self direction in learning. It is necessary to engage learners in thinking about and discussing their own approach to learning, and consciously exploring alternatives. This seems an essential component in developing an awareness of one's own learning processes and preferences.
> (Candy 1991, p. 296)

This view should be compared with other authoritative writers on teaching and learning, e.g. Halliday.

> The teacher should not be reluctant to be explicit and teacher centred at some stages of the learning process. It is the role of the teacher to intervene in the learning process through methodology. The teacher needs to be a teacher at times during the learning process and a facilitator at other times as the learners gain more independence.
> (Halliday 1976, quoted in Joyce 1992, p.19)

1.47

Examine the four approaches below and in each case reflect on the key questions:

Where in each approach is the prime power base?

Does it lie with the teacher, the student group or the individual student?

Or is it shared between two or more of these?

Discussion these four approaches with colleagues.

1 Cambourne's model of learning

For an entirely different approach to learning, read Kelly's article in *Good Practice* No. 3 (1989, pp. 12–13), in which she comments on Cambourne's model of learning as it applies to literacy learning.

If it is available to you, you could also watch the video, *One Model of Learning*, in which Cambourne outlines his views about learning as it relates to reading.

2 Metacognitive learning

Joyce in *Workplace Texts in the Language Classroom* (1992) reminds us that 'teachers and learners need to share a metalanguage related to various aspects of teaching and learning.'

Teachers and learners need to share language to discuss:
- the social contexts of literacy
- the shape and characteristics of texts
- the pedagogical basis of the approaches used
- the strategic dimension of reading and writing and
- assessment criteria and learner progress.

3 Critical literacy

Learning involves a process of becoming conscious about the teaching and learning process while critical literacy requires the ability to talk about language and texts as well as the ability to deal with them.

In discussing critical literacy, Luke writes:

> By critical competence ... I refer to the development of a metalanguage for talking about how texts code cultural ideologies, and how they position readers in subtle and often quite exploitative ways. My argument is that in order to contest or rewrite cultural text, one has to be able to recognise and talk about the various textual elements at work.
>
> (Luke 1992, p.17)

4 Monitoring learning

McCormack and Pancini, in *Learning to Learn: Introducing adults to the culture, contexts and conventions of knowledge,* have drawn upon aspects of cognitive psychology to provide a language for 'talking about and monitoring the learning process that is distinct from that used to talk about the content of learning.'

> One way of describing this model is that it helps students construct a metacognitive self, a self which monitors and controls the processes of learning which means that we become aware of and responsible for the way we approach new ideas and skills.
>
> (McCormack and Pancini 1992, p. 19)

You might also like to follow these ideas up by reading McCormack and Pancini's article 'Becoming an Active Reader' in *Good Practice* No. 14, pp. 2–3.

Responsibility for Learning

1.48

Reflect in your journal on the teacher-learner relationship as described in the comments below.

Deliberate on whether you find that your notions change in relation to
- different categories or types of student
- different purposes of individual students
- different objectives and expectations of the courses they enrol in.

> To assume responsibility for one's own learning is a very difficult step to take. For some adult students, it is too difficult a step, and they are never able to take it ... On the other hand, there are those students who take to it with a spirit of liberation, as if it were what they had been searching for all their lives. In the middle, there is the great mass of students who can accept this responsibility only with varying degrees of difficulty.
>
> (More 1974, quoted in Candy 1991, p. 371)

> Teachers cannot unilaterally 'give control' to learners unwilling to accept it and ... increasing learner control demands a negotiated consensus between the parties involved.
>
> (Candy 1991, p.243)

The Teaching/Learning Cycle

On the next page there is a diagram of the genre based teaching/learning cycle. The diagram depicts learning as a cyclic activity incorporating four different modes. It takes a different approach from the previous readings.

1.49

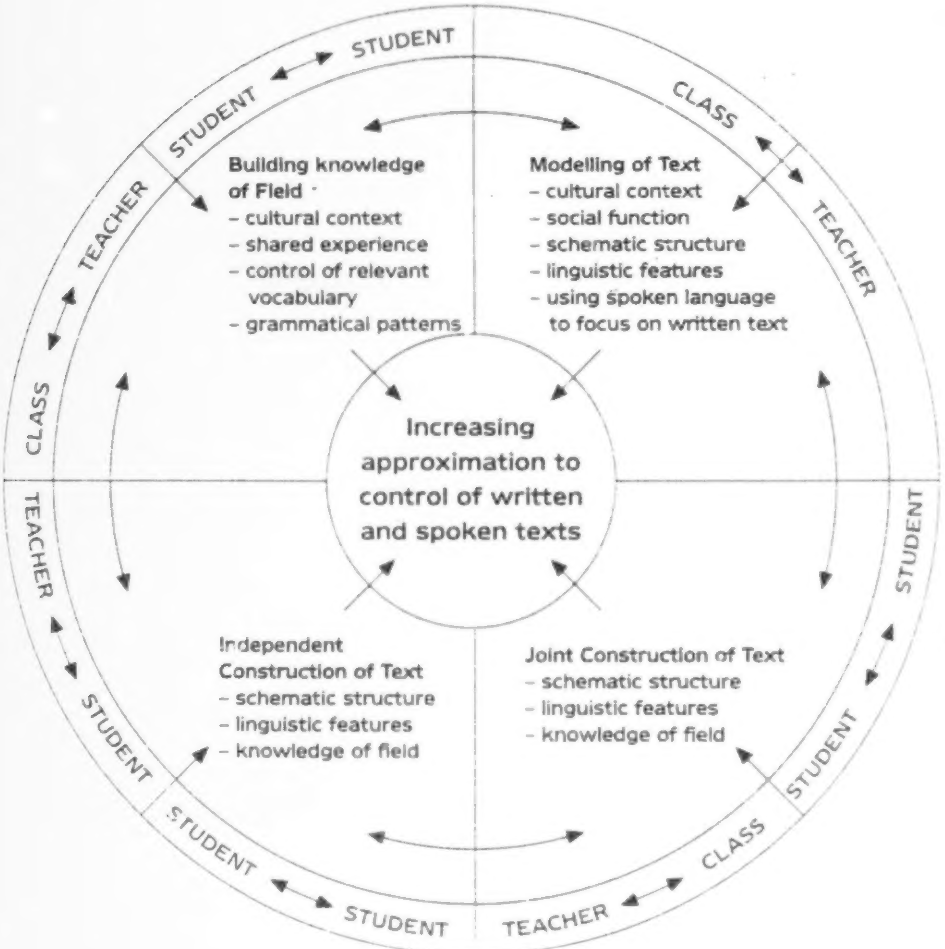
Reflect on the diagram in light of the following questions, and discuss your views with your study group or a fellow learner.

Consider these questions:
- How much importance do you give to the modelling of the text?
- How would you interpret or adapt this cycle so that it reflects your own view of teaching and learning?

Genre-based teaching-learning cycle

The four stages in the Teaching-Learning Cycle are:

Stage One	Building the context or field of the topic or text-type
Stage Two	Modelling the genre under focus
Stage Three	Joint construction of the genre
Stage Four	Independent construction of the genre


STUDENT
STUDENT
TEACHER
CLASS
Building knowledge of Field
- cultural context
- shared experience
- control of relevant vocabulary
- grammatical patterns
CLASS
TEACHER
Modelling of Text
- cultural context
- social function
- schematic structure
- linguistic features
- using spoken language to focus on written text
Increasing approximation to control of written and spoken texts
TEACHER
STUDENT
Independent Construction of Text
- schematic structure
- linguistic features
- knowledge of field
STUDENT
STUDENT
STUDENT
STUDENT
Joint Construction of Text
- schematic structure
- linguistic features
- knowledge of field
CLASS
TEACHER

For the diagram see Hammond 1992, p. 17
For detailed explanation of the stages see Hammond 1990, pp. 19-24

From TNSDC 1993, *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel, Modules 1 to 4*, Module 4, 'Linking Theory and Practice', p. 189

Plotting Positions on the Continuum of Learner Control

Remembering that the emphasis of this module is on clarifying and articulating your personal approaches to the ongoing dialogue with learners about learning processes and the development of learner autonomy, you will realise that the last few readings and exercises are taking you to the heart of the matter.

As Davis says, 'in articulating our own personal approaches, we make the tension explicit between our intentions and actions.' In doing so, practitioners become conscious of the harmonies and tensions that exist between theory and practice.

The concluding activities for this module invite you to plot where you stand personally along the continuum between teacher-controlled and student-controlled learning—and why—in relation to some last comments and questions on the nature of adult learning and the conditions under which it may be enhanced or frustrated.

This involves more than just putting marks on paper. It really involves reviewing all the work you have done throughout the module, including especially the notes on reflections and discussions that you have kept in your journal, as the basis for making a clear and honest statement of your personal position with regard to learner autonomy, taking into account all the relevant factors to do with the intentions and actions, harmonies and contradictions to which Davis refers.

1.50

Use the following set of questions, comments and diagrams as an aid to reflecting back over the module as a whole and to determining where you stand along the continuum of learner control and on what grounds.

1 Is it necessary for 'self direction' that participants accept and share the cultural and political norms of the society they are in?

2 Consider the issues and concerns raised by More, as reiterated by Candy.

- Is learning self initiated and self motivated?
- Who identifies goals and objectives and selects problems for study?
- Who determines the pace, the sequence and the methods of information gathering?
- What provisions are there for the development of learners' ideas and for creative solutions to problems?
- Is emphasis on gathering information external to the learner?
- How flexible is each instructional process to the requirements of the learner?
- How is the usefulness and quality of learning judged?

(More 1973, quoted in Candy 1991, p. 209)

3 Whose interests are served by the learning events in your student group?

4 Do institutional needs or learner needs have greater influence on the structure and content of
- ALBE programs and
- vocational education and training programs?

5 Where do you think your organisation stands on the continuum?

6 Do you usually position yourself at about the same place on the continuum? In other words, is there one position where you usually are most comfortable?

7 What factors in a particular ALBE teaching/learning context can cause you to move from where you normally are on the continuum?

1.51

Study the diagrams of the Open Learning Process on the next two pages.

Take into consideration those aspects of the table on the next page from R. Lewis (1986)*The School's Guide to Open Learning* which you consider relevant to the ALBE field and to your own institution, workplace, and teaching/learning situation.

The chart on the last page of Module 1 offers another set of descriptors for various positions along the continuum of learner control, using the terminology of 'closed' and 'open' aspects of a program.

Remember, finally, that the context for adult literacy and basic education now involves:
- ***using an accredited curriculum;***
- ***rigorous assessment in competency based terms;***
- ***being productive and cost effective, and***
- ***flexible delivery of programs.***

The open learning process

ASPECT	TEACHER-CENTRED	Broad continuum of increasing openness	LEARNER CONTROL
Content	Curriculum content pre-determined	——————————	No planned course of study. Learner sets own goals and decides content.
Methodology	Limited choice provided	——————————	Learner chooses methods that suit preferred learning style.
Mode of delivery	No choice—set by teacher	——————————	Choice of a range of flexible delivery options.
Resources	Set resources	——————————	Choice from a range of text and other types.
Assessment	Teacher assessment	——————————	Joint assessment, including self and peers.
Evaluation	Teacher evaluation	——————————	Learner evaluates achievement of goals and programs
Pace	Fixed start, enrolment, finish and pace	——————————	Open entry/exit points. Learner's chooses own pace.
Sequence	One pathway through content	——————————	Learner chooses own path.

Adapted from NSDC 1992), 'Open Learning', *Open Learning and Flexible Delivery*, Module 1.
Original from R. Lewis, *The Schools' Guide to Open Learning*, p. 37.

Identifying specific open and closed aspects of a program

Aspect	CLOSED	Supervising Machine Operators Course	OPEN
Who	Conditions must be met, e.g. age or qualification	Must have level 1 ASF	Anyone can enrol
What	Curriculum is pre-determined	Curriculum is pre-determined but learners can choose electives specific to their interests and needs	Students choose content of the curriculum
How	One pathway through content	Learners can choose the order they complete modules after the core introductory module	Many pathways through content
	One method of learning	Several methods of learning would be possible and preferable to cater for individual needs	Many methods of learning
	One medium	A number of media suitable and practical	Many media
	Set resources	Prescribed resources supported by a range of found resources	Chooses and selects own resources
Where	One place only	Workplace or home	Anywhere
When	Fixed start/fixed enrolment	Enrol anytime	Start/enrol anytime
	Fixed pace	Own pace supported by a learner contract	Own pace
	Fixed finish	Finish anytime	Finish anytime
	Fixed academic year	Able to learn anytime	Able to learn anytime

The flexible format required for the course used in this example has been identified on a scale of openness as requiring some flexible characteristics and some traditional characteristics. This information must be based on the data gathered to clarify the learners' needs, and can assist the course project team in reaching a shared understanding of their learners' requirements.

Adapted from *National Open Learning Staff Development Program*, Module 1, 'Introducing Open Learning', 1992, p. 39

Adult
LITERACY
Teaching

A flexible delivery program

Module 2
Curriculum areas and issues

Module 2
Curriculum areas and issues

Outline of structure and requirements

Module purpose

This module is concerned with the content of the teaching/learning curriculum in adult literacy and basic education (ALBE). It provides opportunities for participants to critique theories of language which underpin the teaching of literacy. It also focuses on some leading-edge issues which are influencing current thinking about literacy, teaching/learning practice and student assessment.

Nominal duration 25 – 30 hours

Prerequisites There are no prerequisite modules.

Module contents

Unit 1 Theories of language and literacy teaching
- Section A *Using and learning language*
- Section B *The importance of context*

Unit 2 Implications for practice
- Section A *Examining theory and practice*
- Section B *Curriculum issues*

Unit 3 Assessment of student learning
- Section A *Understanding assessment*
- Section B *Assessment in its sociocultural context*
- Section C *Models of the assessment process*

Assessment strategy As set out in the Course Curriculum

Learning outcome details

It is strongly recommended that every learning outcome and related assessment should be the focus of a group discussion in either face to face mode or via teleconferencing or video-conferencing, with the arrangements negotiated between the course presenter and participants.

Learning outcome 1

Participants will be able to:
- identify attributes of theories of language and literacy and
- use the theories to analyse the relationship between culture, social context and language.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

1.1 explain the relationship between theories of language and the teaching of literacy, with particular reference to the *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence.*

1.2 identify how cultural and social contexts influence language use and language choices;

Learning outcome 2

Participants will be able to:
- discuss harmonies and contradictions between language and literacy theory and practice and
- apply theoretical knowledge to improving their teaching of reading and writing to adults.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

2.1 critically analyse the implications of theories of teaching reading and writing for teaching practice;

2.2 explain their own concept of the relationship between theories and models of language and the teaching and learning of literacy;

2.3 apply the theory to their practice in meeting the needs of adult language and literacy learners.

Learning outcome 3

Participants will be able to:
- outline the sociocultural assumptions underlying the assessment of adult literacy competence and
- apply appropriate criteria and procedures in assessment practice.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

3.1 identify the elements and purposes of assessment in relation to principles based in recognised theory and good practice in the ALBE field;

3.2 identify the elements and purposes of assessment in relation to the sociocultural contexts of learning;

3.2 develop valid, reliable guidelines for the assessment of reading and writing in their own programs.

Conditions

Participants will explore and reflect upon current theories and issues affecting adult literacy and basic education, and their own professional practice, by
- reviewing the readings provided, with guidance from the learning activities suggested in the module;
- discussing their ideas and concerns with one or more fellow learners as far as possible and/or with the course presenter;
- recording their reflections, notes on readings completed, points raised in discussion etc in a journal.

Assessment methods

Assessment tasks and conditions should be negotiated by the course presenter with each participant.

Generally, a mix of journal entries (as self assessment), participation in group discussions and written tasks will be used.

Participants who elect for their Practical Project to be 100% of the formal assessment for Modules 1, 2 and 3, i.e. Option 1, will not have to write any other essay material.

Those who elect Options 2, 3, 4 or 5 should submit their written assessment task(s) for Module 2 at an agreed time after the module is completed. (Options 1 to 5 are set out in the Course Curriculum, page 6.)

Essay-type alternatives:

Option 2:
An essay of about 1250 words on a major topic from the learning activities of Module 2, as negotiated with the course presenter.

Option 3:
An essay or paper of about 2500 words; the essay to be on a major topic from Module 2 (or Module 1, as chosen); the paper to be based on a presentation made to the participant's study group on an aspect of the learning activities for Module 2 (or Module 1, as chosen).

Options 4 and 5:
Shorter essays(s) or paper(s) as negotiated for this module (or other modules, as chosen).

Program Flexibility

Presenters must judge the background of each group of participants and assess their need for additional material not provided in *Adult Literacy Teaching*.

In particular, in Unit 1 of Module 2, participants are invited to read and respond to various theories of language and to different language and literacy pedagogies. In so doing the program presupposes that participants are already familiar with the main theoretical and pedagogical approaches. If this is not so for a certain group of participants, then the presenter should spend some time formally covering sections of *Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel*, e.g.

- Module 4, 'Linking Theory and Practice' and
- Module 5, 'Language in ALBE Teaching and Learning', especially Sessions 1 and 6.

Highly recommended reading

ACTRAC (1994)*National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*, ACTRAC Products, Frankston, Victoria.

Brindley G. (1989) *Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum.* National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, NSW.

Cope B. & Kalantzis M. (eds) (1993) *The Powers of Literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing*. The Falmer Press, London.

Courtenay M. (1994) *Integrating Language, Literacy and Numeracy Provision into Vocational Education and Training*. Foundation Studies Training Division, NSW TAFE Commission.

Gee J. (1990) *Social Linguistics and Literacy: Ideology in discourses.* The Falmer Press, London. (especially Chapters 3 & 6)

Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education:
(1990) No. 7: Assessment and Evaluation.
(1992) No. 17: Assessment, Referral and Placement.

Hammond J., Burns A., Joyce H., Brosnan D. & Gerot L. (1992) *English for Social Purposes*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, NSW.

Harris S. (1990) 'Walking through cultural doors: Aborigines, communication and cultural continuity,' in C. Hedrick & R. Holton (eds), *Cross-cultural Communication and Professional Education.*, Centre for Multicultural Studies, Flinders University of SA.

Helme S. & Javed S. (1994) 'Unpacking science and technology: science and technology literacy in ALBE'. *Fine Print*, Summer, pp. 27–31.

Lee A. (1995) 'Discourse, Mathematics and Numeracy Teaching'. *Numeracy in Focus*, No 1. Adult Literacy Information Office (ALIO), NSW and Adult Basic Education Resource and Information Service (ARIS), Victoria.

Lee A., Chapman A. & Roe P. (1993) *Report on Pedagogical Relationships between Adult Literacy and Numeracy*. DEET, Canberra.

Loacker G., Cromwell L. & O'Brien K. (1986) 'Assessment in higher education: to serve the learner,' in C. Adelman ed., *Assessment in American Higher Education.*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education, Washington.

Luke A. (1992) 'When basic skills and information processing just aren't enough: rethinking reading in new times'. *ACAL 1992 Conference Papers,* Vol. 1, pp. 1–24.

Scheeres H., Gonczi A., Hager P. & Morley-Warner T. (1993) *The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting best practice.* University of Technology, Sydney.

Suggested additional resources

Aronson E. & Farr R. (1988) 'Issues in assessment'. *Journal of Reading,* November, pp. 174–177.

Beattie S. (ed.) (1991) *Moving from Strength to Strength.* University of Technology, Sydney (especially Section 7).

Boud D. (1991) *Implementing Student Self-Assessment.* (HERDSA Green Guide). Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia, Jamison Centre, ACT.

Christie F., Martin J. R. & Rothery J. (1989) 'Genres make meaning'. *English in Australia,* Vol. 90, pp. 43–59. (A reply to Sawyer & Watson 1989, see below.)

Crooks T. (1988) *Assessing Student Performance.* (HERDSA Green Guide). Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia, Jamison Centre, ACT.

Delpit L. (1988) 'The silenced dialogue: power and pedagogy in educating other people's children'. *Harvard Educational Review,* Vol. 58, No. 3, pp. 280–98.

Field L. (1990) *Skilling Australia: A handbook for trainers and TAFE teachers.* Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

Gray B. (1987) 'How 'natural' is natural language: employing holistic methodology in the classroom'. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood,* Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 3–19.

Hope D. (1994) 'The literacy war', *The Weekend Australian,* July 16.

Joyce H. (1992) *Workplace Texts in the Language Classroom.* Curriculum Support Unit, AMES, NSW. (especially Chapters 5 & 7)

Lemke J. (1990) 'Language diversity and literacy education'. *Australian Journal of Reading,* Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 320–325.

Lytle S. & Schultz K. (1990) 'Assessing literacy learning with adults: an ideological approach,' in R. Beach & S. Hynds eds. *Developing Discourse Practice in Adolescence and Adulthood*, Norwood, New Jersey.

McCormack R. (1991) 'Framing the field: adult literacy in the future,' in F. Christie (ed.) *Teaching English Literacy: A project of national significance on the preservice preparation of teachers for teaching English literacy*, Vol. 2, pp. 175–200.

Nevara D. & Hood N. (1991) *Literacy Assessment Resource: For placement and referral*. Curriculum Support Unit, AMES, NSW.

Norton M. (1992) 'Assessment dilemmas: a positive approach'. Unpublished paper presented to the Australian Council for Adult Literacy Assessment Forum, Adelaide.

Oakey D. (1990) 'Adult education, work and leisure: a critical analysis'. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 31–47.

Parker R. (1985) 'Towards a model of reading process,' in D. Burns & G. Page (eds) *Insights and Strategies for Teaching Reading*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, pp. 21–44.

Sawyer W. & Watson K. (1989) 'Further questions of genre'. *English in Australia*, No. 90, pp. 27–42.

Smith D. & Lovat T. (1991) *Curriculum: Action on reflection*. (rev. ed.) Social Science Press, Wentworth Falls, NSW.

Weaver C. (1990) 'What whole language is, and why whole language,' in C. Weaver, *Understanding Whole Language from Principles to Practice*, Heinemann Educational Books, London.

Module 2
Curriculum areas and issues

Introduction

> English teachers are gatekeepers: there is, short of radical social change, no access to power in society without control over the social practice in thought, speech and writing of essay-text literacy and its attendant world view.
>
> (Gee 1990, p. 68)

Module 2 offers you an opportunity to re-examine your views and ideas about language, the links between language and literacy, and the teaching of literacy to adults. As with the other two modules of ***Adult Literacy Teaching****, participants are urged to adopt a critical perspective on all the material presented to them, or material they discover for themselves.*

The module is concerned with several major developments, theories and issues currently affecting adult literacy teaching and learning practice. There are recurring references to the ***National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*** *which currently has central importance in shaping curriculum and assessment and informs the developing National Reporting System. Thus, through participation in the module you will be assisted to understand the Framework and its importance, as well as to critique it in the light of the various issues, theories and models put under examination.*

Unit 1, 'Theories of language and literacy teaching,' considers the nature of language and communication, and provides a basis for critical discussion of key issues, including:

- *literacy and power*
- *the importance of context*
- *the responsibility of the adult literacy teacher.*

It invites you to read and respond to various theories of language and to different language pedagogies. In so doing it presupposes that you are already familiar with the main theoretical and pedagogical approaches. If this is not so for your particular group of participants, then the presenter will spend some time formally covering sections of ***Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel,*** *e.g. Module 4, 'Linking Theory and Practice' and Module 5, 'Language in ALBE Teaching and Learning', especially Sessions 1 and 6. If you are studying alone and feel the need of more grounding in language theory and teaching issues then you should try to attend one of the professional development modules of* ***Inservice***

Program for ALBE Personnel *or study other preliminary material suggested by your presenter or facilitator.*

Unit 2, 'Implications for practice,' focuses on the social as well as educational responsibilities of the literacy teacher in the light of the issues raised in Unit 1, discusses approaches to teaching and learning, and looks at some current concerns affecting practice:

- *the impact of technology*
- *the relationship between literacy and numeracy*
- *the relationship between adult literacy and adult English as a second language*
- *integration of literacy education with vocational training*

In Unit 3, 'Assessment of student learning,' the central activities of assessment and reporting are considered in relation to the theories of language and literacy teaching presented earlier in the module, and to the ***National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence.*** *This unit contains three sections:*

A *Understanding assessment*
B *Assessment in its sociocultural context*
C *Models of the assessment process*

Unit 1
Theories of language and literacy learning

Section A
Using and learning language

Before looking at the teaching and learning of literacy it is important to reflect on the phenomenon of language itself. In particular, this unit focuses on the cultural and social contexts of language and asks you to reflect on how an understanding of your own and your students' language influences your teaching and their learning.

Learning activities

What is Language?

2.1

Define language. What do *you* think language is?

Share your ideas on this warm-up question with your study group or the course presenter.

Possible responses to the question include the following statements. They signal concepts and themes that will recur throughout the unit.

- Language is any structure used for communication.
- Language is used to construct meaning.
- Language can include spoken language, body language, sign language, and the use of mathematical and other symbols.
- Language embodies the different cultural norms and expectations of a society and of the groups within it.

Language in Use

2.2

Spend about 10 minutes on each of the two exercises below (**optional**).

These simple activities are designed to highlight some key concepts about language in a concrete way. You may prefer to skip over them and go straight to the theoretical discussions in later activities (see 2.3).

Alternatively, if you are discussing communication in your ALBE program, you may want to try the exercises (or adaptations of them) with your students.

Note in your journal the responses you make to the questions raised in each exercise set out below, spending about 10 to 15 minutes on each. List all the factors which seem to influence your choice and use of language in different circumstances. Note also those features of language which change from situation to situation.

Speculate on the implications your observations may have for your educative or social relationships with your students.

Exercise 1: Factors influencing communication

Draw four columns.

- Column 1: List all the people you communicated with yesterday, or a representative range of them, e.g. family members, neighbours, the bus driver, your bank manager, a shop assistant.
- Column 2: State the method of communication you used, e.g. telephone (oral/aural), face to face (oral/visual), a letter (written).
- Column 2: State briefly what the communication was about.
- Column 2: Make notes on how you communicated in each case.

  What was your language approach in each situation?
  What differences can you observe in the kinds of language you used: range or type of vocabulary, tone of voice, formal or informal expression etc?

Exercise 2: Communication and context

Read the four ways in which the following statement can be understood.

Statement	Meaning	Context
'The door is open.'	'You forgot to lock it again!'	A bank manager to a clerk standing in front of the safe first thing in the morning.
	'No wonder I'm cold!'	A person sitting in a draughty room.
	'Shut the door.'	Two people in an office. It's very noisy next door, but the speaker doesn't want to get up.
	'Please come in.'	A receptionist in an office. Someone has just rung the bell or knocked.

The meaning of a very simple spoken statement depends on who says it, whom they are speaking to, and where the two (or more) people are. When the people are both in the same situation, the meaning will usually be clear to them from the situation, i.e. the context, as much as from the words actually used, or even more so.

We generally assume that the meaning is clear when we speak, and that good communication with our listeners has taken place.

How reasonable is that assumption in the light of the instances given above?
What factors in the context affected the language choices?
What factors in the context affected the quality of the communication?

2.3

Record in your journal several different instances of communication with your students over a week or so.

Include spoken and written communication, noting variations in the contexts of each communication and in the language used.

Spoken and Written Language

2.4

Spend about 10 minutes on an initial exploration of written and spoken language, preferably in association with a colleague.

> Examples of some of the differences between spoken and written language may have come up during the previous activities.
>
> It would be useful before going any further to draw up a list of the differences as you understand them.

In the following extract, from Chapter 3 of his book, ***Social Linguistics and Literacy: Ideology in discourses*** *(1990), James Gee distinguishes literacy from orality, but resists the popular tendency to regard the former as more complex than the latter. He goes on to suggest that the distinction between spoken and written language may be 'problematic,' and to draw attention to the role that may be played by differences in cultural practices between users of language.*

Integration versus Involvement, Not Literacy versus Orality

> The linguist Wallace Chafe, in contrasting writing (essays) and speech (spontaneous conversation) suggests that differences in the processes of speaking and writing have led to specific differences in the products. The fact that writing is much slower than speech, while reading is much faster, allows written language to be less fragmented, more syntactically integrated, than speech.
> The writer has the time to mold her ideas into a more complex, coherent, integrated whole, making use of complicated lexical and syntactic devices that we seldom use in speech (such as heavy use of nominalizations, participles, attributive adjectives and various subordinating devices). In addition to its integrated quality, Chafe calls attention to the fact that written language fosters more detachment than speech, which is face-to-face and usually more highly socially involved than writing. Thus writing is *integrated and detached*, while speech is *fragmented and involved*.
>
> Chafe is aware that these are poles of a continuum, and that there are uses of spoken and written language that do not fit these characterizations (e.g. lectures as a form of integrated and detached speech; letters as a form of fragmented and involved writing; literature, where involvement features are used for aesthetic effects). However, integration and detachment are part of the potential that writing offers; thanks to the processes by which it is produced. It is interesting to note, however, that Richardson, Risk and Okun argue that in many junior colleges in the US, given the pervasive presence of multiple-choice tests and note taking, as well as the ever present

bureaucratic forms to fill out, but a lack of essay writing or discursive exams, literacy has become fragmented, but socially detached, thus partaking of features of both writing (detachment) and speech (fragmentation) in Chafe's terms.

There has, however, been confusion in much of the linguistics and educational literature about what 'orality' actually means. Chafe's work (and much of that of Dell Hymes) can set us on the right track. Chafe points out that many oral cultures have an analog to the integration and detachment of essayist writing in their formal ritual-traditional language or forms of language often referred to as 'high rhetoric'. These forms of language, used on sacred, ritual, or otherwise socially important occasions, involve some degree (often a great deal) of memory and special learning. They very often involve the formulaic, rhythmical, patterned use of language Havelock and Ong call attention to in the orality of Homer, but they may also involve a good deal of lexical and syntactic complexity and explicit reference that relies little on hearer inference.

Such language is similar to the language of the Bible—for example, in the Old Testament language which has its origins in oral poems and narratives. Biblical language is formulaic, rhythmical and heavily patterned, but it is also often complex and explicit. Thus the formulaic and rhythmical features of orality are by no means in opposition to the linguistic formality, explicitness and complexity we associate with writing.

The following are independent: (1) speech (such as normal conversation) that is spontaneous and causal, showing a good deal of fragmentation and social involvement; (2) use of formulaic and rhythmical devices (like parallelism) in speech, for example to tell a story or to use for religious or rhetorical purposes; (3) lexical and syntactic complexity with referential explicitness (requiring a low degree of hearer inference on the basis of shared knowledge). In an oral culture, or a residually oral group, the features in (2) can influence the spontaneous speech in (1) to various degrees and co-occur with the features in (3) to form 'high rhetoric', just as schooled literate people can let the features in (3) influence their conversational speech to various degrees ('talk like they write').

Looked at in this way, the speech-writing or orality-literacy distinction begins to become problematic: what seems to be involved are different cultural practices that in certain contexts call for certain uses of language, language patterned in certain ways and trading on features like integration/fragmentation and detachment/involvement to various degrees.

(Gee 1990, pp. 55–56)

2.5

Review your list of the differences between spoken and written language (from 2.4) after reading the above extract from Gee's book.

Rewrite your list now, if you need to, adding to it or reducing it.

2.6

Interview one or two of your students (with due regard for the sensitivities involved) about the forms of language they feel most comfortable with, e.g. the language they grew up with, or the language they use with a particular social group.

Identify, or get the students to identify, the ways in which this comfortable language is different from:

- your own comfortable language
- spoken language which is considered standard English in contemporary Australian society
- written language which is considered standard English
- the various forms of written language they need to use.

Understanding Literacy

Before making further explorations into current theories of language and the teaching/learning of language and literacy, it is necessary to acquire some descriptive and analytical tools.

In the NSDC professional development package, ***Inservice Program for ALBE Personnel****, there are two modules of particular value which you should have attended, if possible, before this stage of your study of language, in order to acquire these tools. See Module 2, Overview, page 85.*

- *Module 4: Linking theory and practice*
- *Module 5: Language in ALBE teaching and learning.*

Key readings for Module 2:

1 *There is a key reading supplied with Module 5 from Part One of* ***English for Social Purposes*** *by Hammond and others (NCELTR 1992) pages 1–8. This introduction is an important reference for this stage of the ALT course. Read it in the NSDC package or go to the original and read it in full, pages 1–13.*

2 *Reading 2A: Chapter 6, 'Discourse and literacies: two theorems,' of James Gee's book,* ***Social Linguistics and Literacy: Ideology in discourses*** *(The Falmer Press, 1990).*

These two readings by Hammond and Gee should be studied carefully and discussed with your group, with colleagues and/or the course presenter as a *means of clarifying your understanding of the concepts, views and arguments they present and of testing these against your own and others' perceptions. The questions below will be helpful as guides to closer analysis of the readings.*

2.7

Consider carefully how useful are the key concepts of systemic-functional linguistics—genre and register (incorporating field, tenor and mode) described in the reading from Part One of *English for Social Purposes* , i.e. for

- articulating your understanding of the differences between spoken and written language in general;

- explaining the observations you have made about the forms of language with which your students are more comfortable.

2.8

Discuss with a colleague, your study group or the presenter
- your understanding of the implications of systemic-functional linguistics for your teaching practice in ALBE programs; systemic-functional linguistics and
- what strategies you could use to teach adults the differences between spoken and written language.

2.9

Study this additional extract from *English for Social Purposes* (p. 5):

> An understanding of the relationship between [spoken and written modes of language] is central to developing a view of what the term 'literacy' means within the context of an industrialised society.

Analyse in writing, or discuss with other participants, whether you agree that the relationship between spoken and written language should be central to understanding literacy in an industrialised society in particular.

Unit 1
Theories of language and literacy learning

Section B
The importance of context

Review the work you have completed for Section A, as a basis for understanding the elements which make up the context in which communication takes place, and the effects of these elements. Section B explores the importance of context more fully, in theoretical and practical ways, as a basis for the work on the practices of teaching/learning, assessing and reporting in Units 2 and 3 of Module 2.

Alan Luke's A.J.A. Nelson Address, opening the 1992 National Conference of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy in Sydney, established some essential parameters of the discussion with his definition of reading as:

> not a private act but a social practice, not a matter of individual choice or proclivity but of learning the reading practices of an interpretive community. Second, texts are not timeless aesthetic objects or neutral receptacles for information. Rather they are important sites for the cross-generational reproduction of discourses and ideology, identity and power within these same communities.
>
> (Luke 1992, pp. 7–8)

Learning activities

Literacy and Diversity

2.10

Read, discuss with colleagues and **reflect** critically on the following extract and complete the tasks below.

> **Literacy and diversity:** If true literacy is the ability to use written language for our own purposes, then the forms of literacy should be as diverse as are the interests and purposes of people in a society. The diversity of written languages should express not

just social differences, but the real social conflicts which exist among interests, values, and points of view. In a democratic and truly literate society, the uses and forms of written language should reflect and help to create the same healthy social diversity which the spoken language does. In most modern industrial societies today, however, the diversity of written language is greatly impoverished compared to the diversity to be found in the spoken language. This is not simply because writing has evolved to be used in a narrower range of human activities than speech. It is, more fundamentally, because fluent use of the written medium of communication is, unlike spoken language, mainly confined to only a few social groups despite the best efforts of generations of teachers.

The problem, I believe, is that we have not really been teaching literacy at all. A *true* literacy curriculum would teach students how to transpose their own meaning strategies from spoken to written language and how to cope, in written communication, with the divergent forms and strategies of others. In fact, what has been taught for generations, and taught successfully only to very few, is not literacy as such, but only a single highly specialised language variety, alien to all native speakers of English, though much more alien to some than to others. We have, in effect, demanded as the price of admission to the world of written language and its power that students abandon meaning strategies which make sense in relation to the interests, values, and points of view of their own social communities and adopt instead a single set of alien forms and strategies. Not only is that price of alienation from their own communities too high for most of them to pay, the total price in loss of intellectual diversity is too high for any society to pay. The traditional arguments for language standardisation as the sine qua non of literacy are invalid when critically examined in the light of what we now know about the relations of language to culture and social values, the role of language in the construction of personal identity and social relationships, and the forces that lead to language change and social changes.

Standard English: Literacy education has traditionally attempted to impose one particular language variety, often called 'Standard English' on students from all social and language backgrounds. We have not understood that in doing so we were not simply asking for a neutral change of dialect, or a modest shift in register: for very many students we were asking for a fundamental change in social identity or class culture, a change in meaning-making strategies that are an integral part of their membership in their home communities. This is not just because we did not formerly possess our present sophisticated knowledge of these issues, it is also because we have long been misled by the ideology of 'Standard English'.

It is a myth that the variety of English which we insist that students write is simply a slightly more formal variant of the dialect the vast majority of people speak. The fact that neither most students nor most adults can write acceptable 'Standard English' should begin to make us suspicious that this variety is in any important respect close to the language most people use (see Applebee 1985 on written English skills in the US.). How many people speak 'Standard English' including not only its lexis and grammar, but also its discourse patterns, as their native dialect? Very few indeed. What we call Standard English is not even the language of so-called 'educated speakers' for their language is itself neither uniform nor even grammatically identical to the standardised norms (which represent a contrasting 'super-standard', see Schmidt and McCreary 1977,

> and discussion in Sato 1990). It is a myth that English is and always has been highly polylectal, a social mixture of highly diverse language varieties differing in their regional, social class and ethnic origins and differing as well between males and females and even from one age group to another (see Wolfram 1981, Nichols 1981).
>
> What we call Standard English is essentially *written*, and not a spoken variety at all. The standards that describe this variety are meant to apply primarily, if not exclusively, to writing. A purely written variety of a language is not, properly speaking, a dialect at all. It is a *register* of the language, a weighted sub-system of its semantic resources, specialised for use in particular contexts of human activity. It is language specialised to a kind of doing, rather than to a community of users (Halliday 1985).
>
> (Lemke 1990, pp. 321–22)

Like Gee, in extracts you have already looked at, Lemke disputes the notion that literacy is one dimensional, and challenges the value of teaching functional literacy or standard English as if these are absolute entities.

List what you see as the major forces in contemporary Australian society and education pushing for a standard form of English language usage.

Re-examine your understanding of the literacy capabilities and aspirations of your students in the light of Lemke's views.

Explain whether you think they are losing intellectual diversity and abandoning the meaning-making strategies of their own communities.

Why do they want, or need, to master the literacy that you teach?

Why is diversity in language and literacy to be valued?

Literacy and Power

Alan Luke touches on the question of the relationship between literacy and power in the quotation cited at the beginning of this section. The position he adopts is close to the positions worked out by James Gee in Chapter 6 of ***Social Linguistics and Literacy: Ideology in discourses****, and there are obvious echoes in the Lemke extract.*

An important article by Lisa Delpit on teaching literacy to black and other minority groups in the United States, 'The silenced dialogue: power and pedagogy in educating other people's children,' addresses the question very directly and explicitly. Examine the following extracts.

> My charge here is not to determine the best instructional methodology; I believe that the actual practice of good teachers of all colors typically incorporates a range of pedagogical orientations. Rather, I suggest that the differing perspectives on the debate over 'skills' versus 'process' approaches can lead to an understanding of the alienation and miscommunication, and thereby to an understanding of the 'silenced dialogue.
>
> In thinking through these issues, I have found what I believe to be a connecting and complex theme: what I have come to call 'the culture of power'. There are five aspects of power I would like to propose as given for this presentation.
>
> 1. Issues of power are enacted in classrooms.
> 2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a 'culture of power'.
> 3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.
> 4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.
> 5. Those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence.
>
> (Delpit 1988, p. 282)
>
> ... liberals (and here I am using the term 'liberal' to refer to those whose beliefs include striving for a society based upon maximum individual freedom and autonomy) seem to act under the assumption that to make any rules or expectations explicit is to act against liberal principles, to limit the freedom and autonomy of those subjected to the explicitness.
>
> I thank Fred Erickson for a comment that led me to look again at a tape by John Gumperz on cultural dissonance in cross-cultural interactions. One of the episodes showed an East Indian interviewing for a job with an all-White committee. The interview was a complete failure, even though several of the interviewers appeared to really want to help the applicant. As the interview rolled steadily down-hill, these 'helpers' became more and more indirect in their questioning, which exacerbated the problems the applicant had in performing appropriately. Operating from a different cultural perspective, he got fewer and fewer clear clues as to what was expected of him, which ultimately resulted in his failure to secure the position.
>
> I contend that as the applicant showed less and less aptitude for handling the interview, the power differential became ever more evident to the interviewers. The 'helpful' interviewers, unwilling to acknowledge themselves as having power over the applicant, became more and more uncomfortable. Their indirectness was an attempt to lessen the power differential and their discomfort by lessening the power-revealing explicitness of their questions and comments.

> When acknowledging and expressing power, one tends towards explicitness (as in yelling to your 10-year-old, 'Turn that radio down!'). When de-emphasizing power, there is a move toward indirect communication. Therefore, in the interview setting, those who sought to help, to express their egalitarianism with the East Indian applicant, became more and more indirect—and less and less helpful—in their questions and comments.
>
> (Delpit 1988, p. 284)

2.11

Identify the elements of the 'culture of power' that operates between you and your students, and within your institution.

Use Delpit's 'five aspects of power' as your defining framework to analyse the various relationships which make up your interactions with others as a teacher, an employee, a professional colleague, an applicant for a bank loan and so on.

Consider in what ways the power structures of the wider society are reflected in the particular situations you encounter daily.

If you have already completed Module 1, Adult Learners and Learning, reflect back on the discussion about harmonies and contradictions between intentions and actions, particularly in Unit 2.

2.12

Reflect on Gee's remark.

> What is important in communication is not speaking *grammatically*, but saying the 'right' thing at the 'right' time and in the 'right' place.... In socially situated language use, one must simultaneously *say* the 'right' thing, *do* the 'right' thing, and in the saying and doing express the 'right' *beliefs, values and attitudes*. That is, language is always spoken (and written, for that matter) out of a particular *social identity* (or *social role*), an identity that is a composite of words, actions and (implied) beliefs, values and attitudes.
>
> (Gee 1990, pp. 139-40)

Note that it is important to read this quotation in the context of Gee's total argument in Chapter 6.

Do you agree with Gee's view? Why?

Would all of your students agree, or some of them? Can you account for any differences in student opinion?

What are the implications of Gee's concept of social identity for the teaching and learning of literacy?

2.13

Compare Gee's notions of social identity or role with Delpit's views about power.

It is at least implicit in their positions that, for people who are not members of the dominant social group, learning to read and write, i.e. achieving competence in the discourse of the dominant group, entails some change of personal identity.

What issues and concerns does this raise for you as a teacher of adult literacy?

Literacy and People from Minority Cultures

The conceptions of literacy provided by Gee, Lemke and Delpit are influenced heavily by their attention to the needs and perspectives of minority cultures and social sub-groups within wider communities, or even nations. While the variety of social and language backgrounds among your own students will enable you to recognise and understand the cultural and educational phenomena they discuss, the full force and significance of their views can best be felt by considering the situation of members of minority cultural groups in Australia

A relevant article for you to read is an address by Stephen Harris to a conference on Cross-Cultural Communication and Professional Education, 'Walking through cultural doors: Aborigines, communication and cultural continuity'. It is included in the Readings, Reading 2B.

2.14

Test the extent to which you accept the views of Gee, Lemke and Delpit about
- the power relationships between minority cultures and
- the literacies of sub-groups compared to the dominant literacy in our society.

Analyse whether you can align their views with the illustrations Harris provides of fundamental incompatibility between the world views of Anglo and Aboriginal people.

Do you think 'two-way schooling' advocated in the Harris paper would address the sociocultural differences effectively? Why, or why not?

In what ways does the approach have value for your work with students you have taught, or are teaching, from minority groups?

Unit 2
Implications for practice

Section A
Linking theory and practice

Various activities in Unit 1 invited reflections on the implications of what Gee calls the 'new literacy studies' for the adult literacy and basic education field in a general way. Unit 2 of this Module is focused more specifically on the implications of the theoretical positions examined earlier for the choices you and your students need to make about the content and methods of teaching and learning literacy. The first section of this unit looks into current methodological issues and approaches.

Learning activities

Starting Points

2.15

Write short accounts of two successful activities you have used recently with students and share them with course participants or the course presenter.

Examine your own and other participants' summaries for evidence of the ideas about language and literacy, education and training, adult learning, and so on that appear to guide and inform them.

2.16

Compile—as a group—a series of examples that illustrate successful strategies in teaching reading and writing to adults from your experiences and your professional reading.

The group may need to communicate face-to-face or via telephone, electronic mail or other means at a distance.

Examine the examples you come up with for evidence of the theories and the methodologies they are based on. In these examples

- which practices do you feel you could use directly and
- which practices could you adapt in your own teaching?

Record in your journal what you think the difficulties are if the answer is 'none' in some cases.

Transmission or Transaction?

Constance Weaver, an advocate of the whole language approach to teaching language to children, describes two fundamentally contrasting approaches—transmission and transaction—in her book, ***Understanding Whole Language: From principles to practice*** *(1990).*

Her description of the two models of approach is reproduced on the next page.

2.17

Reflect for about 20 minutes on the two models—transmission and transaction—and record your ideas in your journal.

Discuss your comments with a study partner or the course presenter.

> What points of similarity do you observe between the elements of either model and the approaches to teaching and learning that you use most commonly and feel most comfortable with?
>
> Weaver writes from the perspective of teaching literacy to children. Is it necessary to make any adjustments to the descriptions of methodological approaches and elements she provides to make them more relevant to the experience of teaching and learning in adult literacy and basic education?
>
> Do you feel the need to defend or attack any of the particular elements described by Weaver in the light of your practical experience?

Match particular descriptors of each of the two approaches to the theoretical positions adopted by Gee, Delpit, Luke, Lemke and/or Harris—judging by the extracts you have been reading.

Transmission Model	Transaction Model
Emphasis is on direct teaching, which is controlled first by the program and second by the teacher.	Emphasis is on learning, which is facilitated but not directly controlled by the teacher.
Basis is the behaviorist model of learning (for example, Skinner).	Basis is the cognitive/social model of learning (for example, Vygotsky, Halliday).
Learning is viewed as a matter of building from simple to complex, from smaller to larger skills.	Smaller 'parts' of a task are seen as more readily learned within the context of a meaningful whole.
Learning is viewed as habit formation: thus verbalizing/writing correct responses and avoiding incorrect responses are seen as crucial.	Learning is seen as the result of complex cognitive processes that can be facilitated by teachers and enhanced by peer interaction.
Since correctness is valued, risk-taking is discouraged and/or penalized.	Risk-taking, and hence 'errors' are seen as absolutely essential for learning.
All learners are expected to master what is taught when it is taught; thus, most children experience varying degrees of failure.	Learners are expected to be at different stages and to develop at their own pace and in their own ways: thus, there is no conception of 'failure'.
Ability to reproduce or verbalize a predetermined correct response is taken as evidence of learning.	Ability to apply knowledge and to think in novel ways is considered evidence of learning, as is the ability to use general strategies across a wide range of tasks and contexts.

Figure 1.2 Contrasting models of education: transmission versus transactional
(Weaver 1990, p. 9)

2.18

Draw up a table with two columns in your journal.

- In Column 1 list all the perceptions about your students' language and literacy which arose from the work you completed during Section A on the theoretical positions taken by Gee, Lemke, Delpit and/or Harris.
- In Column 2, beside each item in Column 1, note effective ways—in your workplace—of addressing the points you have listed.

Compare your second column with the descriptors Weaver provides.

On this basis, do you see yourself as a 'transmission' or a 'transaction' teacher across the board? Or do you move from one model to the other in different teaching/learning conterxts?

Are there teaching/learning situations in your experience or judgment which call for one approach more than the other?

Addressing Language Diversity

2.19

Review your earlier consideration of Lemke's views about literacy and diversity, and Standard Written English (SWE).

Take into account the following passage on the teacher's responsibility.

Think about whether you find it useful to see your role as 'making Standard Written English accessible' to your students.

> **Language diversity and the literacy curriculum:** What is the alternative to requiring SWE as the only acceptable medium of literacy? In the first place we need to teach a curriculum that will fulfil our responsibility to extend to the widest possible range of students literacy itself; that is the ability to use written language for their own purposes by transposing into written form the semantic strategies that express their own world views and those of the communities from which they come. If we regard their normal uses of spoken language as social dialects of one sort or another, then those dialects will usually lack a specialised register for written communication. Writing is different from speech as a mode of communication and its forms and strategies need to evolve away from the norms of speech in ways that reflect its different functional uses (Halliday 1985). We need to help students (and directly or indirectly their home communities) to develop new written registers, distinct from SWE in ways that reflect and someday may help constitute the uniqueness of their communities' values, viewpoints, and interests. Only such a strategy will help ensure both the full social diversity of written language essential to the democratic articulation of all social viewpoints, and the true literacy of the great majority of our students.
>
> **Making SWE accessible:** We also have a second responsibility: to make SWE accessible to students who need it for their own purposes. To do this we must create a new curriculum, recognising that SWE is a difficult 'foreign language' for most students, using the best methods of foreign language and ESL teaching, and incorporating the insights of bilingual-bicultural education into the linkages between successful mastery of a new language and insights into the alien culture that guides its patterns of usage. Some have called this approach 'Standard English as a Second Dialect' (SESD, Sato

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> 1990), which is a good beginning; though, as we have seen, the problem is more complex than this name implies. SWE is the formal written register of the upper-middle class social dialect of English (UMCE). We simply do not know at present the best pathways to SWE from subcultural English strands, such as other social class dialects, minority dialects such as US Black English), English creoles (such as Australian Aboriginal English or the Caribbean creoles), or ethnic group varieties (Latino-American English, Australian 'Migrant Englishes'), to name a few.
>
> (Lemke 1990, p. 323)

Try to decide if the position taken by Lemke is applicable only to such clearly identifiable minority groups as are mentioned above—or whether you see a broader value in it.

> Is there a stance (implicit or explicit) on the need to acquire 'Standard Written English' in the formal curriculum document which directs your teaching?
>
> Is this stance appropriate to all of your students, or only to some of them, or none?

The Teacher's Role

Weaver's description of the transmission and transaction models defines key elements from the viewpoint of the teacher. As Delpit makes clear in her discussion of the differences between the 'process' and the 'skills' (or 'product') approach to teaching literacy, it is also important to understand the role of the teacher from the perspective of the student, and to respond accordingly.

> Although the problem is not necessarily inherent in the method, in some instances adherents of process approaches to writing create situations in which students ultimately find themselves held accountable for not knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them. Teachers do students no service to suggest, even implicitly, that 'product' is not important. In this country, students will be judged on their product regardless of the process they utilized to achieve it. And that product, based as it is on the specific codes of a particular culture, is more readily produced when the directives of how to produce it are made explicit.
>
> If such explicitness is not provided to students, what it feels like to people who are old enough to judge is that there are secrets being kept, that time is being wasted, that the teacher is abdicating his or her duty to teach. A doctoral student in my acquaintance

was assigned to a writing class to hone his writing skills. The student was placed in the section led by a White professor who utilized a process approach, consisting primarily of having the students write essays and then assemble into groups to edit each others' papers. That procedure infuriated this particular student. He had many angry encounters with the teacher about what she was doing. In his words:

> *I didn't feel she was teaching us anything. She wanted us to correct each others' papers and we were there to learn from her. She didn't teach anything, absolutely nothing.*
>
> *Maybe they're trying to learn what Black folks knew all the time. We understand how to improvise, how to express ourselves creatively. When I'm in a classroom I'm not looking for that, I'm looking for structure, the more formal language ... Now my buddy was in [a] Black teacher's class. And that lady was very good. She went through and explained and defined each part of the structure. This [White] teacher didn't get along with that Black teacher. She said that she didn't agree with her methods. But I don't think that White teacher had any methods.*

When I told this gentleman that what the teacher was doing was called a process method of teaching writing, his response was, 'Well, at least now I know that she *thought* she was doing something. I thought she was just a fool who couldn't teach and didn't want to try'.

(Delpit 1988, p. 287)

2.20

Re-examine Weaver's descriptors of the transmission and transaction models in the light of Delpit's references to product and process.

What outcomes and/or approaches are most highly valued by the program and institution where you teach, by you and by your students?

Below are comments made by several writers about the role and responsibilities of the teacher of literacy.

2.21

Make notes in your journal about the validity of each comment in terms of your own thinking and your practical experience.

Discuss your views with colleagues or the course presenter.

1 *Teachers as gatekeepers*

The teacher of English is not, in fact, teaching English, and certainly not English grammar, or even 'language'. Rather, she is teaching a set of discourse practices, oral and written, connected with the standard dialect of English. More importantly, she is apprenticing students to dominant, school-based social practices. Language and literacy acquisition are forms of socialization, in this case socialization into mainstream ways of using language in speech and print, mainstream ways of taking meaning, and of making sense of experience.

English teachers are gatekeepers. There is, short of radical social change, no access to power in the society without control over the social practices in thought, speech and writing of essay-text literacy and its attendant world view ...

The English teacher can cooperate in her own marginalization by seeking herself as 'a language teacher' with no connection to such social and political issues. Or she can accept the paradox of literacy as a form of inter-ethnic communication which often involves conflicts of values and identities, and accept her role as one who socializes students into a world view that, given its power here and abroad, must be viewed critically, comparatively, and with a constant sense of the possibilities for change. Like it or not, the English teacher stands at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural and political issues of our time.

(Gee 1990, pp. 67–68)

2 *Teachers, and students, as experts*

The teacher cannot be the only expert in the classroom. To deny students their own expert knowledge is to disempower them. Amanda Branscombe, when she was working with Black high school students classified as 'slow learners' had the students analyze RAP songs to discover their underlying patterns. The students became the experts in explaining to the teacher the rules for creating a new RAP song. The teacher then used the patterns the students identified as a base to begin an explanation of the structure of grammar, and then of Shakespeare's plays. Both student and teacher are expert at what they know best.

(Delpit 1988, p. 288)

3 *Teaching as intervention and as facilitation*

The teacher should not be reluctant to be explicit and teacher-centred at some stages of the learning process. It is the role of the teacher to intervene in the learning process through methodology. The teacher needs to be a teacher at times during the learning process and a facilitator at other times as the learners gain more independence. Above all it is her role to enable the learners to become speakers and writers of English.

(Joyce 1992, p. 19)

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4 *Teaching and critical reading*

Quite simply, where reading is conceived of as basic skills—whether decoding, word recognition, recall, or even as 'meaning-making'—pragmatic questions about the strategic place and use of the text in a context or situation tend to be subordinated; and critical questions about the veracity, validity and authority of the text tend to be silenced. As an alternative, I would argue for a model of reading that enables one not only to decode and construct messages, but which makes explicit and overt the social relations of power around the text, and places squarely on the table the issue of who is trying to do what, to whom, with and through the text.

(Luke 1992, p. 7)

5 *Teachers as ethnographers*

We must keep the perspective that people are experts on their own lives. There are certainly aspects of the outside world of which they may not be aware, but they can be the only authentic chroniclers of their own experience. We must not be too quick to deny their interpretation, or accuse them of 'false consciousness'. We must believe that people are rational beings, and therefore always act rationally. We may not understand their rationales, but that in no way militates against the existence of these rationales or reduces our responsibility to attempt to apprehend them. And finally, we must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness. In other words, we must become ethnographers in the true sense.

Teachers are in an ideal position to play this role, to attempt to get all of the issues on the table in order to initiate true dialogue. This can only be done, however, by seeking out those whose perspectives may differ most, by learning to give their words complete attention, by understanding one's own power, even if that power stems merely from being in the majority, by being unafraid to raise questions about discrimination and voicelessness with people of color, and to listen, no, to *hear* what they say. I suggest that the results of such interactions may be the most powerful and empowering coalescence yet seen in the educational realm—for all teachers and for all the students they teach.

(Delpit 1988, p. 292)

6 *Teachers as convention breakers*

Just because certain genres can be identified as those that have been required for success in school in the past does not mean that school should redefine these as genres for success in the future. We need a new language curriculum and a new use of language in the curriculum, not just a better educational technology to reproduce the traditional genres of school literacy. In reality, fixed classifications of genre may even mean that teachers lose sight of where the real power lies. Those who are really innovative and really powerful are those who break conventions, not those who reproduce them.

(Cope & Kalantzis 1993, p. 15)

Methodological Concerns

Some of the approaches available to the adult literacy teacher were indicated in the six extracts in the last segment. Section A of Unit 2 concludes with a closer analysis of current methodological issues and concerns about the teaching of reading and writing.

A useful starting point is the article on 'The Literacy War' which appeared in ***The Weekend Australian*** *in July 1994. It is reproduced in the Readings (Reading 2C).*

2.22

Read the article.

> Do you think 'war' is an appropriate description for the debates which go on from time to time about the comparative merits of various approaches to teaching literacy?

Discuss issues related to the popular interest in literacy education for school age children particularly, but also for adults, in your group or with a colleague.

The Whole Language Approach

Weaver has described fourteen common principles and practices of the whole language or holistic approach to teaching literacy to children.

> **What whole language is: common principles and practices**
>
> 1. *Whole language is a philosophy rather than an approach.* This philosophy stems from research converging from various disciplines, including cognitive psychology and learning theory, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, anthropology and philosophy, and, of course, education. Whole language is a way of thinking about children and their learning, a set of beliefs that increasingly guides instructional decision-making for those committed to this educational philosophy. Thus, if we talk about a whole language approach, we mean instructional practices that stem from this philosophy, not a system that can be embodied in sets of prepackaged materials.

2. *A whole language philosophy is based upon the observation that children grow and learn most readily when they actively pursue their own learning.* Many children can memorize factual information and learn to respond correctly to worksheets and tests that assess 'mastery' of relatively minute and isolated skills. Their learning of concepts and strategies and their mastery of complex processes like reading and writing, however, is best facilitated by active involvement: in the case of literacy development, by actually reading and writing authentic texts that have meaning for the children. They need to be psychologically engaged in what they are doing.

3. *To foster emergent reading and writing in particular, whole language teachers attempt to replicate the strategies parents use successfully to stimulate the acquisition of language and the 'natural' acquisition of literacy.* Parents and whole language teachers recognize that it takes years for children's oral language to become like that of adults in their language community, and they accord emergent readers and writers the same gift of time. They do not expect 'correct' word identification in reading or 'correct' spelling in writing from the very outset; instead, they reward children's successive approximations toward adult norms-just as parents do in encouraging their children to speak.

4. *Whole language teaching is based upon the observation that much of what children learn—such as functional command of the structure of their native language—is learned with little, if any, direct instruction.* Thus, whole language teachers give students the opportunity to engage in the processes of reading and writing, even when their 'reading' as yet involves only reconstructing a story from text and pictures, or their 'writing' consists only of putting letter like marks on paper to express their thoughts. Just as children developed functional command of spoken language by listening to others model adult speech and by speaking and receiving feedback mainly on the truth of their utterances rather than on the form, so they gradually progress toward adult norms in reading and writing.

5. *Recognizing students' incredible ability to learn complex processes by engaging in those processes, whole language teachers conceptualize direct teaching much differently than traditional teachers.* Direct teaching frequently occurs in response to students' demonstrated readiness and need: for example, when a writer is using dialogue and finds that readers cannot tell who said what, the writer is typically ready to learn the function and use of quotation marks. Other direct teaching may occur incidentally (whether pre-planned or not), in the context of an authentic literacy event in which an entire group or the class is engaged. These and other kinds of direct teaching are important in whole language classrooms, but the majority of students' time is spent in reading, writing, discussing, and otherwise exploring concepts and ideas.

6. *Whole language learning—and the teaching that stimulates it—proceeds more from whole-to-part than from part-to-whole.* With the guidance of their teacher and the accompaniment of their peers, as needed, emergent readers read and re-read favorite texts, familiar songs. rhymes, or repetitive stories that contain few new words from stanza to stanza or episode to episode. Gradually, with appropriate instructional help and with concomitant writing experience, they learn to distinguish more and more words—that is, they develop a growing repertoire of sight words—and they learn basic letter/sound relationships and patterns. Thus, whole language learning and teaching proceeds from wholes toward parts, in sharp contrast to both a phonics approach and a sight word or 'look-say'

approach. As in other areas of learning, children develop literacy by beginning with function and gradually developing control over form, by starting with gross features and gradually learning finer distinctions, by more and more closely approximating the complex behavior of adults rather than trying to master that behavior skill by isolated skill.

7. *Knowing that language and literacy are best developed through functional use, whole language teachers thus engage students in reading, writing, speaking and listening, for a variety of authentic purposes.* In primary classrooms, children may use writing to 'sign in' at the beginning of the day, to label things in the classroom, to take telephone 'messages' and write grocery lists and menus at a home center, and so forth; they read what they and others in the classroom have written, as well as familiar environmental print (for example, labels on cans and packages), familiar songs and rhymes, and stories with repetition that makes them easy to read. Gradually they come to use a variety of written materials—text books and popular books, biographies, articles, newspapers—to gather information and to explore ideas across all aspects of the curriculum. *In whole language classrooms that are 'littered with literacy' and in which children daily engage in the complex processes of reading, writing, discussing, and of course thinking, children simultaneously develop language and literacy, and learn about and through these processes.*

8. *A whole language philosophy asserts that in order to grow and learn, teachers and children must all be learners, risk-takers, and decision-makers, taking significant responsibility for learning within the classroom.* No prepackaged program can become the curriculum. Teachers must be sufficiently informed to select and develop teaching materials and practices that stem from the whole language philosophy, and they must have sufficient autonomy to reject materials and practices that conflict with that philosophy. To a significant extent, the curriculum is 'negotiated' with children: that is, it evolves as teachers and children together explore topics and themes, generating new interests and goals. Whole language teachers ensure that children develop needed skills and cover mandated areas of the curriculum, but these objectives are realized by integrating language and literacy with other aspects of learning.

9. *In whole language classrooms, learning is often fostered through social interaction.* Whole language teachers recognize that social interaction among students—discussing, sharing ideas, working together to solve problems and undertake projects—enhances learning. Therefore, whole language teachers facilitate productive interaction among children. Whole language teachers know that emphasizing cooperation rather than competition helps each child develop his or her potential.

10. *In whole language classrooms, children are treated as capable and developing, not as incapable and deficient.* Whole language teachers do not give students batteries of tests in order to determine in what isolated skills they might be deficient, nor do they constantly try to ferret out and criticize children's weaknesses. Rather, they notice and praise children's strengths and their developing competence as learners and literate individuals. Building upon the children's strengths, whole language teachers create a climate in which children are eager to take risks and grow, rather than afraid to respond for fear of making 'errors' and revealing weaknesses that will subject them to remediation. Not surprisingly, then, the students who seem to exhibit the greatest growth in whole language classrooms are the ones traditionally considered deficient.

11. *In whole language classrooms, typically there are few behavior problems, not only because students are more actively involved in learning but because students are given the opportunity to develop self-control rather than merely submit to teacher control.* Instead of controlling children by their demands, whole language teachers develop learning communities characterized by mutual respect and trust—communities in which many decisions are made cooperatively, and students have numerous opportunities to make individual choices and take responsibility for their own learning. In such environments, learning flourishes and behavior problems subside.

12. *In whole language classrooms, assessment is intertwined with learning and teaching; though periodic assessment may be pre-planned and structured, daily learning experiences also provide opportunities for assessment—which in turn leads to the modification of teaching, as necessary.* Knowing that standardized, state-mandated, and basal reading tests are inadequate, inappropriate, and even invalid measures for making educational decisions, whole language teachers develop a variety of means for assessing and evaluating students' progress, as well as their own teaching. Such measures include not only periodic performance samples of reading and writing, but think-aloud protocols, recorded observations, conferences and interviews, inventories and questionnaires, dialogue journals and learning logs, and student-kept records. Taken together, several such means are far more valid indicators of student progress than prepackaged tests.

13. *A whole language philosophy reflects and encourages a far different concept of literacy than that reflected in traditional classrooms.* In traditional classrooms, becoming literate is operationally defined as practicing reading and writing skills that are all too often divorced from the context of their use. And literacy is implicitly—if unintentionally—defined as high scores on tests of reading and writing skills; certainly, beyond the classroom, these scores tend to be equated with the development of literacy. Though students in whole language classrooms frequently score as well or better on such tests, raising test scores is not the primary aim of whole language teachers, nor are high test scores their definition of literacy. In whole language classrooms, the daily learning experiences as well as the assessment measures define literacy much differently. Students do not 'practice' skills in order to become literate; rather, they use such skills and strategies daily in reading and writing a variety of materials for various purposes—in thinking and discussing and creating. In short, they daily engage in the kinds of behaviors that characterize the literate adult.

14. *Whole language classrooms foster the kinds of attitudes and behaviors needed in a technologically advanced, democratic society.* From the outset of their schooling, children in whole language classrooms learn to think of themselves as competent, as readers and writers rather than as mere children who have yet to master the skills of reading and writing. This mind-set has a powerful effect upon their self-concept, motivating them to engage actively in learning and encouraging the fulfilment of that prophecy—as they learn to think of themselves as readers and writers, they become effective readers and writers. Furthermore, students in whole language classrooms are thinkers and doers, not merely passive recipients of information. They learn to think critically and creatively and to process and evaluate information and ideas rather than merely to accept them. Thus, whole language classrooms prepare students to participate actively in a democracy, rather than to submit passively to authority.

(Weaver 1990, pp. 22–27)

2.23

Reflect on Weaver's exhaustive statement in your journal and discuss it with one or more colleagues or the course presenter.

> What are the points of agreement and disagreement between Weaver's principles and your own philosophy of teaching, and your practice?

Modify Weaver's approach, which is focused on children, and describe in your journal the whole learning approach you would take, if any, in using it with adults.

> Which principles do you think Gee would question, and on what grounds?

If you have already completed Module 1, Adult Learners and Learning, look back over the material related to flexible delivery, and note the points of similarity or difference between the adult education principles espoused by that overall approach and those put forward by Weaver for teaching reading and writing to children.

Genre Approach to Literacy

The Introduction to a recent book edited by Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis (1993), ***The Powers of Literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing,*** *is included in the Readings (see Reading 2D).*

2.24

Read Cope and Kalantzis.

Summarise, in your journal, the concept of genre and of the genre approach to literacy which they present and discuss them with a study partner or the course presenter.

Add some comments to your summary which indicate how much you agree with their approaches based on the following questions.

> What are the implications for questioning or changing your practice?

What are the common elements of thinking between Cope and Kalantzis and Gee, Lemke, Delpit and/or Harris?

Does the genre approach use a transmission or a transaction model of learning?

Lines of Debate

As the newspaper article indicated, conceptions of language and literacy and methodological approaches to teaching and learning them, are matters of considerable controversy in the media.

Cope and Kalantzis make it clear that they are engaging in a significant debate about pedagogy. They claim that substantial agreement exists among members of the 'genre school' about the essentials. They also acknowledge that debates among the adherents about details are vigorous, at least as vigorous as their opposition to the positions of practitioners of other schools of thought.

It is not difficult to locate evidence of conflict between different schools of thought in the journal literature. The December 1989 issue of ***English in Australia****, for example, includes an article by Wayne Sawyer and Ken Watson, itself replying to earlier presentations by the 'genre school,' set alongside a genre-based response from Frances Christie and others.*

You are encouraged to locate and read these samples of the debate about genre pedagogy if you are seeking to refine your philosophical position by clarifying and reviewing the issues.

2.25

Review the fourteen principles and practices of the whole language approach as described by Weaver.

Identify at least three of Weaver's statements which you think advocates of the genre approach would not agree with.

Where do you stand in relation to the points of disagreement you observe?

Critical Reading

Luke's influential A.J.A. Nelson Address to the 1992 ACAL Conference, included in the Readings (see Reading 2E), re-defines 'reading' in terms that will remind you of extracts from Gee, Delpit and other writers considered already. For example, Luke declares:

> Neither texts nor genres themselves have power. Rather they are sites and capillaries where relations of power are constituted and waged, and these relations are contestable, institution and site-specific.
>
> (Luke 1992, p. 6)

He goes on, using a model developed jointly with Freebody, to describe 'four key elements of proficient, critical reading as social practice in late-capitalist societies'.

ELEMENTS OF READING AS CRITICAL SOCIAL PRACTICE

CODING COMPETENCE
learning your role as code breaker
(How do I crack this?)

SEMANTIC COMPETENCE
learning your role as text participant
(What does this mean?)

PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE
learning your role as text user
(What do I do with this, here and now?)

CRITICAL COMPETENCE
learning your role as text analyst
(What is this text trying to do to me?)

(Luke 1992, p. 11)

2.26

Read Luke's address in full and record your views in your journal.

Consider, from your professional training, teaching experience, and wider reading, whether you agree with Luke's analysis of the historical evolution of concepts of reading and approaches to the teaching of reading.

Luke stresses that each element of the model is necessary but not sufficient for a critical literacy and that the model is not a developmental sequence or cycle or taxonomy.

Think about how you could apply the model in devising learning experiences and presenting them to adults who are experiencing different kinds of difficulty with reading.

Metalanguage

Alan Luke describes 'critical competence' in literacy as 'the development of a metalanguage for talking about how texts code cultural ideologies, and how they position readers in subtle and often quite exploitative ways'. Helen Joyce elaborates on this central notion of the 'new literacy studies' in this extract.

> Teachers and learners need to share a metalanguage related to various aspects of teaching and learning. Teachers and learners need to share language to discuss:
>
> - the social contexts of literacy;
> - the shape and characteristics of texts;
> - the pedagogical basis of the classroom;
> - the strategic dimension of reading and writing, and
> - assessment criteria and learner progress.
>
> Learning involves a process of becoming conscious about the teaching and learning process. Learner-centredness does not mean that the teacher does not make decisions but it does mean that adult learners, as much as possible, need to be informed about all aspects of the education process. Critical literacy requires the ability to talk about language and texts as well as the ability to deal with them. Learners need to be able to assess their own progress and this can only occur in a meaningful way if the teacher shares information about objectives and assessment criteria. This development of a metalanguage is something that develops along with the development of other aspects of language learning. The degree of technicality of the metalanguage depends on the teacher and learners. There are three aspects to language development: learning language, learning through language and learning about language (Halliday, 1979). The last of these requires a shared language between teachers and learners ...
>
> What is needed to enable learners to speak and write English is a social theory of language which can make explicit to teachers and consequently to learners the relationship between language and the cultural and social contexts of use. Such a theory enables teachers to make explicit to learners the subconscious knowledge of grammar, texts and context which native speakers have, that is, the knowledge which makes them competent language users and effective participants in social situations.
>
> (Joyce 1992, p. 43)

2.27

Consider the two questions below concerning Joyce's notion.

> To what extent do you agree with the position taken by Joyce?
>
> What are the implications for your methodological practice?

Compare Joyce's position with the view taken by Delpit about skills or product and process and/or with the ideas of Cope and Kalantzis.

Compare the concept of metalanguage and its usefulness for adult literacy teaching and learning with the more general notions about metacognitive learning considered in Module 1, Unit 2: Implications for Practice, item 1.47.

List in your journal what power relationships seem to be involved between the teacher, the student group as a whole and/or the individual student in the positions taken by Luke and Joyce on teaching critical literacy.

Discuss the following question in your group or with a colleague as a conclusion to Unit 1.

> How far does the notion of developing and using metalanguage go towards reconciling the main differences between the grammatical, whole language, genre and other methodological approaches you have been considering throughout this unit, in particular for teaching adult literacy?

Unit 2
Implications for practice

Section B
Curriculum issues

At any given time in the adult literacy and basic education field a range of topical issues will be appearing in the journals and newsletters, preoccupying practitioners and managers in reflection and debate and generally exerting influence on practice. This section of the module looks into some specific issues influencing the content of the ALBE curriculum and the methodology of teaching reading and writing to adults. These issues were being vigorously canvassed when this project, the revision of Adult Literacy Teaching, concluded

It is important that this section of the course especially be kept up to date. Accordingly, the learning activities will invite participants themselves to identify particular topics they wish to explore, whether individually or in groups. The activities also lend themselves to individual participants or pairs
- *reading the periodicals of the field*
- *investigating such matters as current national projects, research initiatives, new teaching/learning approaches and innovative resources and*
- *reporting back to their study group or to the presenter.*

Learning activities

Technology and ALBE

Reproduced below is an extract from the Overview and Rationale section of the ***Strategic Action Plan for Flexible Delivery of Adult Literacy, English as a Second Language and Numeracy Programs****, the product of a 1994/95 DEET project on implementation of the Australian Language and Literacy Policy and the* ***National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy****. The extract sets the background for recommendations on various strategic actions related both to the challenges imposed by technology and to the opportunities technology provides for improving access to language and literacy learning and improving the quality.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Communication and information technologies and multimedia will play an increasingly significant role in the flexible delivery methodologies of programs. As importantly, following Mayer's identification of 'Using Technology' as a key competency, technological and computer literacies should be forming core elements of English language and literacy curricula.

Some of the now generally accepted forms of technology being used to deliver programs in the field include teleconferencing, video-conferencing, broadcast television and computer assisted learning. Computer managed learning systems are also being trialled. It is only a matter of time before the rapidly developing capabilities of electronic access to systems such as the Internet will change the face of learning and communication systems for all time.

Major issues regarding technology raised during consultations can be summarised as:

- the need to ensure that technological approaches are not seen as a total solution. Learners need a variety of delivery modes and learning resources, especially some of the more disadvantaged learners targeted in this program area;
- integration of information and communication technologies as they affect the learners' lifestyles, work and learning environments into English language and literacy curricula;
- the need for human interaction as an essential element of the learning process;
- the need to provide a learning environment where learning is contextualised; (One of the most widespread fears expressed during Project consultations was that funding would be directed into producing expensive software packages that would be unrelated either to the learner context or accredited curriculum, or that would have extremely limited shelf life.)
- the cost and accessibility of computing and other equipment required by providers and clients for most technological delivery modes;
- the need for professional development of teachers both for an appreciation of the potential uses of technology in English language and literacy and to develop the requisite delivery skills;
- the current high costs of development of some multimedia learning packages and the consequent need for either joint venturing with industry or a national approach to development.

Notwithstanding that careful consideration must be given to the uses of technology in the English language and literacy field, the way forward heralds exciting possibilities

> for equity and access. Some of these possibilities include the use of broad band and cable TV for delivery of targeted English language and literacy programs in the home, the use of technological learning stations in workplaces and public libraries, and the use of the Internet for delivery, teacher networking and professional development.
>
> There is a role for all major stakeholders to play in developing innovative approaches to delivery. Funding needs to be carefully targeted to research, development and experimentation in this area, and be linked to other major initiatives in the education field (eg. those of the Open Learning Technology Corporation, the Employment and Skills Formation Council and others within the Commonwealth Government).

It is timely that a major project, the Science, Technology and Maths (STEM) Adult Literacy Project is now under way, through the Victoria University of Technology. This initiative is advancing a broader view of technology than the extract above, while addressing some of the same issues. It takes a major cue from the ***National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*** *which includes technical communication (using technology) among the six aspects of literacy. The STEM Project also builds a comprehensive definition of technology literacy which embraces both learning science and technology and learning about them.*

Information about the STEM Project may be found in an article by the coordinators, Sue Helme and Syed Javed, in ***Fine Print*** *(1994, Summer), pp. 27–31, and in* ***ARIS Bulletin*** *(1994, Vol. 5, No. 4) and from other sources.*

2.28

Find out more about the directions being pursued by the STEM Project and the proposals it is developing for the incorporation of scientific and technological literacy into adult literacy and basic education.

Review your understanding of needs and concerns covered in the extract from the *Strategic Action Plan for Flexible Delivery* and consider the implications of an emphasis on technology for your ALBE programs.

> What changes should you make to the content and methodologies of your teaching practice? What constraints do you have to take into account?
>
> What assumptions do you make about the knowledge and skills of your students with regard to technology, or about their access to relevant information and resources? Are these reasonable assumptions?
>
> Are there differences between your male and female, and older and younger, students in terms of how familiar or comfortable they are with

information and communication technologies, their interest in them and their attitudes towards them?

What responses should you make to any differences you observe?

Identify the professional development you yourself may need to undergo to become more competent in appropriate areas of technology and find out what means are available for achieving the goals you set.

Numeracy and Literacy

The Australian Language and Literacy Policy defines literacy as:

> ...the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.
>
> Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. **Effective literacy** is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop through an individual's lifetime.

The ***National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*** *includes numeracy in its definition of communication:*

> oral, written mathematical, graphic or symbolic representations, and those derived from gesture or expression, used simply or in combination....their components frequently overlap and interact to the extent that they are rarely separable.

The meaning of 'literacy' throughout this course concurs with these definitions.

However, Alison Lee argues, in her brief article in the first issue of ***Numeracy in Focus*** *(1995, January), that:*

> in practice there is a considerable confusion and misunderstanding over the meanings of these terms [mathematics and language, numeracy and literacy] and the relationships between them. I suggest in what follows that the term 'discourse' is a useful way of breaking down some 'commonsense' notions of the two categories, language and mathematics, as singular and monolithic, and of breaking *into* what the terms might mean in specific sites of practice.
>
> (Lee 1995, p. 47)

Lee goes on to apply the concept of discourse, which carries similar meaning and implication as it does in Gee (1990), to establish the key observation that mathematics 'appears within a vast array of other discourses', in complex and multiple ways, and to introduce the notion of 'imbrication':

> a complex embedding, overlapping, intrication and patterning of constituent components within a larger whole.
>
> (Lee 1995, p.49)

This notion was more fully elaborated in the report, ***Pedagogical Relationships between Adult Literacy and Numeracy*** *(Lee et al. 1994), which explores:*

> how mathematical material of different kinds is imbricated within the different discourses realised in the texts encountered by adults in different contexts. In terms of the pedagogical implications of this theoretical move, this then allows an investigation of the kinds of mathematical readings and actions that might appropriately be performed upon particular texts and in the context of achieving particular tasks.
>
> (quoted in Lee 1995, p. 49)

2.29

Consider a range of the learning experiences you have organised for your students recently and think about the ways in which elements of mathematics were 'imbricated' within the literacy texts you used.

Look back and record in your journal how you and your students did or did not recognise and use all the opportunities to grasp the connections between literacy and numeracy.

2.30

Decide if your study group is interested in further exploration of numeracy along the lines suggested by Lee and agree on which members of the group, individually or perhaps in pairs, will read and report on further writings.

- Case studies contained in the *Pedagogical Relationships* report
- Features of the 1995 NSDC professional development course, *Adult Numeracy Teaching: Making meaning in mathematics*
- Theoretical material and practical examples contained in D. Bell & S. Guthrie (eds) (1994) *An Integrated Approach to Teaching Literacy and Numeracy*, Adult Literacy Information Office, NSW TAFE Commission
- Other articles in *Numeracy in Focus.*

Adult Literacy and Adult ESL

There is an increasing trend in educational policy and management to bring together the two areas of adult English as a second language and adult literacy and basic education, although the two areas have different histories and major components of them are funded in different ways.

***The Pedagogical Relations Between Adult ESL and Adult Literacy** (1992) is the report of a research project jointly funded by the Commonwealth Government's International Literacy Year program, the Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.*

It summarises the similarities and differences between the two areas:

> - similarities in the definitions and theoretical understandings of language and literacy as well as in adult learning theory;
> - similarities of views across the two fields as to what constitutes a 'good literacy teacher' and 'good curriculum';
> - similarities in methodologies that were drawn upon in teaching practice.
>
> The major differences were between and within NESB and ESB learner groups, specifically in the following areas:
> - different needs of learners;
> - different goals of learners;
> - different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of learners;
> - different levels of control of spoken and written English, and
> - different levels of formal education.
>
> Differences between NESB and ESB learners were sharpest at beginner levels of provision, with the consequence that there were also important differences in how ESL and Adult Literacy teachers drew on theory and curriculum planning in the development of programs to meet the different needs of different groups of learners.
>
> (*The Pedagogical Relations Between Adult ESL and Adult Literacy* 1992, p. 1)

2.31

List the similarities and differences between adult literacy and adult ESL programs by identifying specific definitions, views and methodologies in which they share common ground, and specific ways in which the needs, goals, backgrounds, levels of control, and levels of previous education differ between the two kinds of learner (generally, as the two groups do overlap).

What differences between teaching practice in the two areas do you notice, in addition to those listed?

In what practical ways, in your workplace, can adult literacy and adult ESL programs be brought together to benefit clients?

What advantages and what disadvantages are there for practitioners, as well as for learners, in closer liaison between the two areas?

Integrated Training

The National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy (NCAELLS) *includes the following objective and strategy (2.2):*

> **Objective**
>
> Throughout 1994–1995 diversify and expand effort in the integration of English language and literacy in vocational training.
>
> **Strategy**
>
> - integrate language and literacy competencies into vocational training through curriculum and professional development.
> - develop English language and literacy supplementation and support for jobseekers and other students undertaking vocational training or seeking recognition of prior learning acquired formally or informally.
> - develop programs to remove barriers to participation in workplace training, eg Train the Trainers, Plain English.
>
> (*NCAELLS* 1993, p. 7)

Endorsement of NCAELLS by commonwealth and state/territory governments in April 1993 has given rise to several initiatives focused on integrating literacy education and vocational training.

One of these is the discussion paper by Marianne Courtenay (1994) for the Foundation Studies Training Division, NSW TAFE, ***Integrating Language, Literacy and Numeracy Provision into Vocational Education and Training****.*

Another is the DEET/ALLP project on integrating English language, literacy and numeracy into vocational education and training—a framework due to be completed in 1995.

The Courtenay paper covers major issues in the following passage.

> In integrated provision, language, literacy and numeracy development and vocational skills development are recognised as interrelated components of the one process. Integrated programs are characterised by three key elements:
>
> 1. they identify the language, literacy and numeracy skills essential for vocational competence and address them as part of skills development;
>
> 2. they take into account the likely language and numeracy skills of potential learners and provide for appropriate skills development in these areas;
>
> 3. they recognise that training places particular language, literacy and numeracy skills on the learner and ensure that the language and processes of skills development are consistent with the language, literacy and numeracy requirements of the job or vocational area.
>
> But despite the recognition of the need for language, literacy and numeracy provision linked to vocational training, most current provision is still treated as separate from vocational programs.
>
> There are two main reasons for this. One is that, to date, industry competency standards have not taken sufficient account of the language, literacy and numeracy skills required by particular jobs or occupational categories. The second is the view that skills development in these areas is not the concern of vocational training, and that learners should meet certain standards of language, literacy and numeracy in order to undertake vocational courses. This has led to assumptions regarding educational program provision which are at odds with linguistic and adult learning theory and practice.
>
> (Courtenay 1994, p. 17)

2.32

Explain whether you agree with Courtenay's analysis of the major issues, and why.

> What views do you have about the integration of adult literacy and vocational training, in principle and in terms of practical implementation?

List briefly opportunities for integration which exist in your workplace.

Vocational Competence and Literacy Competence

Skilling Australia: A handbook for trainers and TAFE teachers *lists the following types of skill as the ones most sought after by industry:*

- self management;
- conceptual skills;
- creative problem-solving;
- holistic thinking;
- self directed learning skills;
- literacy skills;
- information management;
- team work and group learning;
- communication skills, and
- fault diagnosis and rectification skills.

(Field 1990, p. 13)

It is worth noting that 'literacy skills' in industry are equated in ***Skilling Australia*** *with 'English language' for NESB workers. This often happens in a vocational context and there can be insufficient awareness of the needs of ESB employees for improved literacy.*

2.33

Compare carefully Field's list with the six aspects of language and literacy identified in the *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence:*

- performing tasks (procedural communication)
- using technology (technical communication)
- expressing identity (personal communication)
- interacting in groups (cooperative communication)
- interacting in organisations (systems communication), and
- interacting with the wider community (public communication).

Consider whether the needs of industry relate more closely to some aspects of English language, literacy and numracy in the Framework than others.

Think about this issue:

> If curriculum design is guided by the Framework will it be able to address the concerns raised by Courtenay about the problem of the separation of vocational programs from language, literacy and numeracy programs?

Unit 3
Assessment of student learning

Section A
Understanding assessment

Increasing prominence is being given in clear and explicit ways to the role, functions and operation of the monitoring and assessment of student learning in the national vocational education and training system. This section of Module 2 looks at key concepts of assessment and the purposes of assessment and reporting on adult literacy competence in the changing policy context.

Learning activities

Defining Assessment

One way to clarify the meaning of the term 'assessment' and to expand understanding of the processes it involves is to be explicit about the distinctions between it and other terms, e.g. 'evaluation'.

Print, in his book, ***Curriculum Development and Design*** *(1987, chapter 8), divides evaluation into*
- *product evaluation and*
- *process evaluation.*

Then he divides process evaluation into
- *curriculum evaluation and*
- *teacher evaluation.*

Brindley (1989) in ***Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum,*** *chapter 2 of which is included in the Readings (see Reading 2F), considers that assessment is concerned with 'learner attainment' and distinguishes it from evaluation which is concerned with broader program outcomes. He remarks that funding authorities and members of the public often confuse the two concepts, and try to judge the effectiveness of educational programs solely in terms of student achievement, such as aggregated test scores, rather than more globally.*

An extract from the article, 'Assessment in Higher Education: To serve the learner,' by Georgina Loacker (1986) and other members of the Assessment Council of the Alverno College in Wisconsin, USA, contrasts assessment to testing and measurement, on the one hand, and to evaluation, on the other.

In the ***National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence*** *there is a careful exposition of assessment principles within a competency based training program.*

> The Framework is not, by itself, an assessment instrument. However, it does provide general descriptions of exit-level competence from the various Stages of development in various Aspects of communicative competence, and is a basis for the preparation of more specific learning outcomes.
>
> It enables some forms of assessment while precluding others and suggests the following consequences:
>
> - The purpose of assessment of competence is not to sort or grade in any final way, but to describe what people can do, and what they might need to do, to progress.
> - This Framework is intended to set nationally applicable language, literacy and numeracy Statements of Competence. Assessment of competence, however, has to be locally and contextually specific: to a task, a job and/or a community.
> - Assessment and reporting based on the Framework begins the process of ensuring comparability. Learners in formal education settings, moreover, should be able to see the connections between education and work or community life as these Statements of Competence gain wider acceptance among employers and in the community generally.
> - In line with the focus on competence as a social activity, assessment needs to be holistic and based on complete activities.
> - Because competence is a relationship between knowing and doing, assessment must reflect this. This means that multiple and varied forms of assessment are required. It also means that assessment needs to relate directly to specialised contents and specific contexts. Generic or generalised tests to determine competence are inappropriate for use in relation to this Framework and, in fact, to determine communicative competence generally.
> - Competence is inferred from performance. These inferences need to be drawn from multi-faceted processes of data collection and not from norm- or criterion-referenced tests alone. Tests of competence need to assess synthesis, application and relation of practice to theory.
>
> (*National Framework of AELLN Competence* 1994, p. 27)

2.34

Use your journal to record and comment on these definitions and other relevant material you are aware of.

Build up a basic frame of reference for yourself, through reflection and discussion, of the process of assessment, and its relationship to measurement of student learning and to program evaluation.

Aspects or Elements of Assessment

2.35

Develop your own working definitions of the following main types of assessment and record your ideas in your journal, using the Framework, Print (1987), Smith and Lovat (1991), or other recent books on assessment:

- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- norm-referenced assessment
- criterion-referenced assessment
- goal-based assessment
- self-assessment
- peer assessment.

Review at least two assessment tasks you have recently set for your students (or those set by colleagues) and categorise them.

Alternatively:

Look into the periodical literature (e.g. *Good Practice*) for examples of each type.

In the studies you have read you may have found that many deal primarily with school-based and/or classroom-orientated curriculum.
Some types of assessment described in those references may still seem to you to be closely related your teaching/learning context: others may not.

2.36

Consider which types of assessment are most likely to be relevant to:

- competency based training in vocational education and training sector
- workplace adult basic education programs
- other non-traditional settings where learning occurs
- flexible delivery of curriculum
- the definitions of learning and assessment set out in the curriculum framework and documentation within which you work.

Assessment in Relation to Learning

Loacker (1986) defines assessment as follows as 'a multi-dimensional process of judging the individual in action'. This view can be linked to the notion of competence as a combination of knowledge and skills applied in the performance of some action in a workplace or other practical setting.

Definitions and Assumptions

> Assessment, as we use it throughout these pages, is a multidimensional process of judging the individual in action. Embedded in this definition are assumptions about learning that emphasize active development of the learner.
>
> **Assumptions.** One assumption is that *learning involves making an action out of knowledge—using knowledge of think, judge, decide, discover, interact and create.* We contend that acquiring or storing knowledge is not enough. Unless one carries knowledge into acts of application, generalization and experimentation, one's learning is incomplete.
>
> Another assumption is that an educator's best means of judging how well a learner has developed expected abilities is to look at corresponding behavior—thinking behavior, writing behavior, inquiry behavior, or appreciating behavior, for instance. We presuppose a link between behavior and cognitive and affective processes. Because human behavior is purposeful, educators can find out more about a learner's problem solving ability by observing that person actually solving a problem and clarifying reasons and processes than by confirming a "correct" solution he or she has selected from a set of alternatives.
>
> A third assumption is that learning increases, even in its serendipitous aspects, when learners have a sense of what they are setting out to learn, a statement of explicit standards they must meet and a way of seeing what they have learned. When students of science, for example, are told that they will have to go beyond reading their text, listening to their teacher and replicating lab experiments—that they will have to raise their own questions and test their own hypotheses—they are more apt to learn to do all of the above more meaningfully and effectively. Out of that success they then

develop confidence that enables them to recognise unsought-for insights when they come upon them.

We contend that such awareness of expectations and standards enhances learning because it places in a person's hands the means of collaborating in his or her own learning and gradually taking control of one's own learning process. Within tha context, learners recognize that their question, "How am I doing?" is taken seriously. They also begin to see an important implication of that question: that further learning builds on and develops from, where each learner is at any given point. Therefore, that question becomes the occasion for doing better when everyone responsible for learning—teacher as well as student—receives as complete an answer as possible. Assessment aims for such an answer.

What does it mean to aim at an increasingly complete answer to the question of how a person is doing? One can get some insight into the question by considering what testing tells us about someone, in contrast to what assessment tells us.

Assessment in Contrast to Testing and Measurement. Testing, as it is frequently practised, can tell us how much and what kind of knowledge someone possesses, whereas assessment provides a basis for inferring what that person can do with that knowledge. Much testing carefully limits what we can know about a person to a set of written or marked answers. Assessment aims to elicit a demonstration of the nature, extent and quality of his or her ability in action.

When we narrow testing to measurement, it answers the question "How am I doing?" with a quantitative response that says, "You did a certain percent of what was asked on a given occasion" or "You did as well as a certain percent of all those who tried or might try to do the same". Assessment answers the question with a descriptive account of precisely what the individual person has done on a given occasion. By judging a person's performance against pre-set, agreed upon, and public criteria, assessment aims to make the performance meaningful so that he or she can build future performance on the basis of understanding.

Assessment and Evaluation. Emphasis on the progress of the individual learner also distinguishes assessment from program evaluation. Evaluation looks for elements that can be combined and compared in order to draw conclusions about groups of students, with a view to making judgments about the general direction of a course, program, or a person's performance and relies on varying contexts to assure that as much complexity of a person's ability is elicited as possible.

Our definition of assessment is shaped by its power to serve the learner, it means eliciting samples of varied expressions of an ability, judging those samples against identified criteria for performance, and providing as full a picture as possible of that ability as possessed by that learner. Assessment as learning weaves together several strands of a long history of meaning that have developed separately.

Loacker et al. pp. 47–48.

2.37

Consider how far you agree with the three assumptions about learning and assessment that are embedded in Loacker's definition:

- 'multi-dimensional process'
- 'judging the individual' and
- 'in action'.

Discuss with a study partner, a colleague or the course presenter Loacker's notion that assessment is, or should be, a 'learning experience'.

> What implications does this notion have for your own practice as a teacher, and in particular monitoring and assessing your students' learning?

2.38

Clarify for yourself the main differences between Loacker's understanding of assessment and that provided earlier in the outline of Print's and Brindley's views.

> Which description do you prefer? Why? Which seems better suited to the needs and interests of your students?
>
> Are the different concepts equally capable of being implemented in the teaching and learning circumstances you are accustomed to?

Assessment and Learning Outcomes

The formulation of the teaching purposes and learning outcomes of a course within the competency based training system will be a major focus of Module 3, Program Development. However, it is necessary to look briefly into outcomes at this stage in the Curriculum Areas and Issues module because it is not possible to discuss assessment without also considering the purpose and learning outcomes of the particular course.

There has been a significant change in terminology, and also in the focus for the products of learning, since the acceptance of the competency based training system. Some earlier literature used 'objectives', which were usually behavioural objectives. CBT uses 'learning outcomes', which are observable and measurable *statements of what a learner should be able to do at the end of a course, in line with the desired competencies.*

Brindley (1989) makes the basic point:

> **THE ROLE OF OBJECTIVES**
>
> Closely linked to the debate concerning the appropriateness of 'input-output' models of programme evaluation is the question of the role of objectives in educational planning. It is a commonplace to point out that one cannot assess without having stated what it actually is that one is going to assess. In other words, it is necessary to establish clear criteria for assessment, which would need to be derived from some sort of statement of objectives.
>
> (Brindley 1989, p. 4)

2.39

Focus on a particular teaching/learning event: on one student or student group and a specific unit of work or even one lesson you have presented recently.

Reflect in your journal on the purposes which informed the teaching and learning activities you undertook with that particular teaching/learning event.

What principles are these purposes based on?

Use the assessment tasks you set to analyse exactly what you can deduce from the tasks about what you expected the students to know or be able to do.

2.40

Compare your summary of the purposes behind the activities (the *planned* learning outcomes) and the assessment tasks you set, i.e. the tools used to judge whether the students achieved the knowledge and/or skills (the *actual* learning outcomes).

Were any of your planned learning outcomes not assessed, or any actual learning outcomes not related to the planned outcomes? Does it matter?

Was the task valid, i.e. did it assess what you intended it to assess?

New Policies and Approaches

The brochure on the ***Australian Vocational Certificate Training System*** (1992), prepared by the Employment and Skills Formation Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training, contrasts the traditional approach to assessment, examinations and testing with the benefits of CBT:*

'Traditional' approach	Benefits of CBT
Students must establish they know something.	Students must establish they know and can 'do' things relevant to the workplace.
Students are often sorted into successes or failures.	Students are challenged to match or better set standards.
Often does not give credit for what has been formally or informally learned before.	Recognises prior learning if it is relevant to the competence.
Tells employer what a student has studied.	Certificate tells employer what trainee is competent at, and at what level.
Assessment is mainly/all in the classroom.	Assessment can be done at work.

*** Note:** The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System is now called the Australian Vocational Training System.

In a similar vein, the ***National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT)*** *which was also developed in 1992 incorporates an explicit statement of principles governing assessment in a competency based vocational education and training system.*

> Assessment is a key part of quality training, and consistent assessment across the country is a major feature of the Framework. Most importantly, all assessment must effectively measure what competencies a person has gained in an accredited course or training program.
>
> Assessment is based on the following five principles.

Principle 1: Competency based training (CBT)

Assessment will measure whether competencies have been gained. These competencies will be developed with input from industry and endorsed by the National Training Board.

Principle 2: Flexibility in approach

Assessment may include methods such as practical exercises, written tests, computer-generated tests, and where applicable interviews, portfolios, employer reports, written assignments.

Principle 3: Validity

Assessment methods must actually measure what they say they measure. For example, an essay alone would be an inappropriate method of assessment for measuring practical panel beating skills.

Principle 4: Reliability

This means that any trained assessor would reach the same conclusion about a person's achievement of a particular competency.

Principle 5: Recognition of prior learning

Provision must be made for the recognition of prior learning.

(*NFROT* 1992, p.11)

2.41

Review your analysis of planned and actual learning outcomes (see 2.40) in terms of the above principles and using the comparison between the traditional approach and the CBT approach to assessment.

Critique the benefits claimed for the CBT approach (in the second column above) over the traditional approach (in the first column) analysing whether your experience of assessment in CBT squares with the claims.

Explain briefly the assessment requirements of the curriculum you work within and discuss how well they measure up against the expectations of NFROT.

> How does your own practice in setting learning outcomes and assessing learning outcomes measure up against the expectations of NFROT?

Identify some changes you could make.

2.42

Discuss with others, or record in your journal, your thoughts on how well the terms used in the National Framework of AELLN Competence match the principles for assessing vocational knowledge and skills in the extracts above.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Through its policies on the recognition or prior learning NFROT caters for individuals who have gained competencies through both formal and informal education, and through work and life experiences, because not all competencies are acquired through accredited courses or recognised training programs. This is a major item of the training reform agenda.

NFROT has five principles for the recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Principle 1: Competence
The recognition of prior learning will focus on the competencies a person has acquired as a result of both formal and informal training and experience: not how, when or where the training occurred.

Principle 2: Commitment
It is important that training providers have a commitment to recognising the prior learning of individuals. This will ensure that individuals will not have to duplicate their training unnecessarily.

Principle 3: Access
Every individual may have his or her prior learning recognised.

Principle 4: Fairness
All participants must be confident that the recognition of prior learning process is fair.

Principle 5: Support
Individuals applying for recognition of prior learning must be given adequate support. Personnel involved in the assessment process must be trained to support applicants so that an efficient and effective service is maintained.

2.43

Consider

- the extent to which your institution observes the NFROT principles of RPL
- improvements that could be made and
- how might these be implemented.

2.44

Research what mechanisms are available to you for ensuring that the competencies for which a student may be seeking RPL are
- current and
- equivalent to the competencies which framed the learning outcomes of the course involved.

Flexible Delivery and Assessment

*A major premise of **Flexible Delivery: A national framework for implementation in TAFE**, endorsed by the National TAFE Chief Executives Committee in November 1992, is that:*

> The recognition of prior learning is an important process in creating learning pathways which are flexible, encourage participation and improve access. Mechanisms established to recognise prior learning should be readily accessible to all potential learners.
>
> They should provide for an appropriate range of assessment mechanisms and approaches to meet the needs of individual clients.
>
> (p.15)

*Three of the ten principles on which the Flexible Delivery Framework is based are specifically related to the assessment of students' learning in the broad senses defined by the Australian Vocational Training System and the **National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT):***

- Learners should move freely and without prejudice from one sector of learning to another.

  (Sectors include school, higher education, industry training providers and other public and private providers.)

- Learners should gain recognition for past learning no matter where it occurred provided it is relevant and competence is current.

- Assessment should be based on the achievement of competence and not be dependent on the length of time for which study was undertaken. Delivery methods should ensure that progress is not time-dependent.

2.45

Critique how these principles can actually be implemented within the established educational and industrial context of your workplace.

Consider, in particular, the methods you use (and are expected to use) to assess and report on students' progress their achievements.

How far do the methods overcome time-dependent structures
- semesters or terms
- timetabling and other fixed arrangements?

Professional Competence in Assessment

The report, ***The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting best practice*** *(Scheeres et al. 1993) includes monitoring of student learning as a specific unit of professional competence.*

Its four elements, with related performance criteria and cues (examples) are set out on the next page.

2.46

Critique this description of the four elements of competence required for monitoring learning and related performance.

How well do they sit with the conditions under which you teach and your students learn?

How attainable or sustainable are the elements of competence in your particular circumstances?

4.4

Unit 4: Monitoring Learning

ELEMENTS	*PERFORMANCE CRITERIA*	*CUES (EXAMPLES)*
4.1 Uses knowledge of current theories of language, mathematics and learning to select and evaluate appropriate assessment methods.	4.1 Current theories of language, mathematics and learning are used to design and implement assessment procedures for formative and summative purposes. Assessment tools and techniques are based on the accumulated research in assessing learning, language and mathematical development. Student and teacher assessment is based on meaningful reading, writing and/or mathematical tasks that are relevant to and integrated with a students' program.	1. Demonstrates from student records a practical application of a variety of assessment tools and techniques at different points—initial, ongoing and exit. 2. Explains available assessment methods and why certain ones are more appropriate than others. 3. Teachers and students use common language to discuss and record progress. 4. Encourages students to be critical of their own work. 5. Reassures unconfident learners in relation to assessment.
4.2 Modifies students' programs as a result of continual monitoring.	4.2 Students' programs are adjusted in the light of progress. This may be expressed as competencies. Teachers negotiate with students to continually clarify learning goals and to incorporate these into programs. Student self-assessment is encouraged by providing tasks which progressively develop students' abilities to set goals, analyse achievements and self-assess.	1. Chooses assessment processes and criteria which allow teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. 2. Ensures that students express goals and self-assess progress towards them. 3. Adjusts students' programs as a result of short term achievements/competencies. 4. Adjusts students' programs to continue to work towards long-term goals. 5. Confers with colleagues about student progress.
4.3 Documents students' progress in ways meaningful to students' supervisors and those to whom there is a reporting requirement.	4.3 Assessment records and program modifications are explained to and discussed with specific audiences including students, training institutions, workplaces and other stakeholders. Teachers are aware of different program requirements which call for different responses to recording and monitoring student progress eg courses where curriculum is wholly/partially externally set, and are able to document accordingly.	1. Maintains accessible records. 2. Meets documentation requirements for different programs. 3. Helps students record their own progress. 4. Discusses methods of recording progress with students. 5. Demonstrates discretion and sensitivity in conveying student progress to outside bodies. 6. Gives reports of programs to appropriate audiences.
4.4 Continually reflects on and adjusts own practice.	4.4 Critical self reflection is developed and consultation with students, colleagues and others is carried out to monitor and adjust own practice.	1. Provides time in classroom context for individual and group discussion. 2. Engages in peer consultation. 3. Uses knowledge and ideas from professional development to appraise effectiveness of monitoring progress.

Purposes of Assessment

In a later chapter of ***Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum****, Geoff Brindley reports the outcomes of a survey undertaken by the AMEP Research Coordinating Committee. This concerned the assessment practices of teachers of English as a second language, based on what was described as 'a rough characterisation of what teachers do when they design and deliver courses'.*

His findings are summarised in the table below.

Perceived Importance of Functions of Assessment (n = 131)

	MEAN	SD	RANK
Place learners in class	4.296	1.059	1
Provide feedback on progress	3.888	1.221	4
Provide information on learners' strengths and weaknesses for course planning	4.137	1.129	2
Provide information to funding authorities for accountability purposes	2.482	1.512	6
Encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning	3.957	1.268	3
Provide students with a record of their achievement	3.207	1.393	5

(Brindley 1992, Appendix B)

2.47

Consider the six categories of questions presented to AMEP teachers and carefully review their ranking in the last column.

Decide whether you think they provide a reasonably complete picture of the work teachers undertake in their role as assessors.

> How comparable is that ESL picture to the area of adult literacy teaching?
>
> Would you personally rank the importance of the purposes of assessment in the same order as in the survey? Why, or why not?

Conduct a mini-survey of opinion among your workplace colleagues and/or fellow participants, using the six categories from the table above to determine what they think are the priorities.

Reflect on the mini-survey results and discuss what it indicates about the priorities operating where you work.

Focuses in Assessment Practice

*In **Moving from Strength to Strength** (page 7.10) there is a diagram designed by Beattie showing 'Examples of Focuses in Assessment Practice'.*

It is reproduced on the next page.

2.48

Study the diagram as a description of the purposes for teaching and learning and for assessing in adult literacy and numeracy and compare what it says with the survey by Brindley.

Record in your journal any fresh insights into the process of assessing student achievement that you gain from the comparison.

2.49

Read again column 3 of the diagram noting the issues formulated as questions.

Use your journal to note your answers.

Review your answers to Beattie's questions in the light of the principles from the *National Framework of AELLN Competence* (reproduced earlier, page 128).

EXAMPLES OF FOCUSES IN ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

Focus for assessment	*Concerns*	*Issues*	*Assessment strategies and procedures*
Individual student's growth or progress	Achievement of student goals	What is the role of the teacher? Should assessment information be quantified? Are student goals consistent with program system goals?	Self-appraisal Journal keeping Profiling Anecdotal records
Management of programs and organisations	Accountability Funding National standards Needs of industry	To whom are teachers accountable? Nature of literacy and numeracy Who decides what is assessed?	Standardised testing Basic skills testing Performance indicators
Adult learning theory	Student needs Adult status of students Importance of non-academic outcomes Negotiating etc	Should adults be assessed formally? What to assess?	Participatory and observational forms of assessment Student self-monitoring Teacher performance
Training for industry	Acquisition of skills and knowledge Progression through structured content Job mobility	Who is helped by the testing? Who controls the curriculum?	Criterion-referenced tests Skills audits Competency checklists Screening
Varied focus	Effectiveness of the program Type of program Purposes of program Involvement of all parties	How are the roles in the assessment process determined?	Combination of procedures—depending on purposes of assessment

Achievement vs. Proficiency

2.50

Read the discussion by Brindley about achievement, proficiency and the types or levels of achievement. (See pp. 10–17 of the extract in Reading 2F.)

> How useful do you find Brindley's notion of achievement levels?
>
> Can you apply it productively to the analysis and discussion of a specific statement of assessment criteria or assessment tasks which you know of or have used yourself?

2.51

Discuss the following questions with your study group, the presenter or a colleague:

> How important do you think it is for the assessment of adult students' achievement in literacy and numeracy to range across all three levels described by Brindley?
>
> Do you consider one or other of the levels to be more significant as a focus for assessment than the others?

The National Reporting System

The project to develop a national system for reporting on student achievement within adult English language, literacy and numeracy programs, building on both the ***National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence****, and the* ***National Framework for the Recognition of Training****, was completed in mod-1995.*

Tasks and sub-project activities for the National Reporting System project included the need to:

Specify English language, literacy and numeracy indicators of the competencies in the National Framework, which can be reliably assessed and reported.

Ensure that the National Reporting System and the National Framework provide an appropriate and consistent source of advice to industry regarding English language, literacy and numeracy statements for integration into CBT and industry standards.

Write a position paper explaining the place of numeracy and mathematics in relation to language and literacy competence.

It is evident that the National Reporting System, once it is adopted and implemented, will have far-reaching impact on ALBE curriculum, especially on assessment and reporting.

2.52

Research the details of the National Reporting System at its current stage of implementation.

Review the connections between the National Reporting System and the *National Framework of AELLN Competence*, and analyse the implications that the National Reporting System has for teaching and assessing adult English language, literacy and numeracy achievement, especially in your own program and workplace.

This activity could be undertaken by a single member of the group or by a pair, reporting back for the information of the whole group. Participants who choose to do this might then wish to present their research and analysis as a paper for formal assessment. They could eventually publish it.

Unit 3
Assessment of student learning

Section B
Assessment in its sociocultural context

Building on the work you completed on literacy and power and related topics earlier in Module 2, you will find that Section B considers the power relationships inherent in the assessment and reporting of students' achievements in learning to become literate. It raises questions about the neutrality, objectivity and fairness of assessment criteria and practices.

Learning activities

Critical Literacy and Assessment

2.53

Revisit the extracts from Gee (Reading 2A) and Lemke (2.19 on page 104).

The brief quotations below will remind you of some key elements in their concepts of literacy and its relationship to society.

> Literacy—of whatever type—only has consequences as it acts together with a large number of other social factors—including a culture's or a social group's political and economic conditions, social structures and local ideologies.
>
> Any technology, including writing, is a cultural form, a social product whose shape and influence depend upon prior political and ideological factors … Abstracting literacy from its social setting in order to make claims for literacy as an autonomous force in shaping the mind or a culture simply leads to a dead end.
>
> (Gee 1990, pp. 60–61)

> We need to help students (and directly or indirectly their home communities) to develop new written registers, distinct from SWE [Standard Written English] in ways

> that reflect and someday may help constitute the uniqueness of their communities' values, viewpoints and interests.
>
> (Lemke 1990, p. 323)

> The curriculum must accept responsibility for literacy as such, and therefore for preparing students for a world of English diversity, in writing as well as in speech.
>
> (Lemke 1990, p. 324)

2.54

Make notes in your journal and discuss with a study partner what kinds of learning outcomes should be written according to the Gee and Lemke positions.

Extrapolate from these notes some ideas about the kinds of assessment criteria and assessment tasks that need to be set.

The National Framework of AELLN Competence

In its opening paragraphs the National Framework makes a crucial statement about the links between literacy and the socio-cultural contexts of students.

This statement provides a rationale for the breadth and inclusiveness of the Framework.

> Competence requires a connection of performance and knowledge and skills, coordinated in such a way as to achieve social goals in particular contexts. People act on the basis of what they know to realise and transform their knowledge through performance. While knowledge and skills are the products of formal education, training and study, they are also the products of life experience. Throughout this document the use of the term culture refers to differences that arise from Aboriginal, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic background. These differences are neither static nor uniform, but varied, multilayered and dynamic. Constellations of differences in the life experiences of adult learners produce distinctive ways of knowing and doing. Since competence is always context-specific it needs to allow for cultural diversity in the way that it is determined. This Framework has developed a notion of competence that recognises and values cultural differences in performance.
>
> The competence statements in the Framework have been selected to reflect not only the social character of language, literacy and numeracy, but also contemporary changes in

> the structure of work, communication and technologies, and the evident cultural diversity of our society. As a consequence, they have been pitched at a level of generality which can encompass the diverse backgrounds, needs and resources of learners and workers, educators and trainers and the various education. training and community contexts in which these people live and work.
>
> (*National Framework of AELLN Competence* 1994, p. 5)

2.55

Review the learning outcomes and assessment criteria and tasks you drafted earlier (see 2.54).

> How consistent are they with the concept of competence on which the Framework is based?

Consider what modifications you could make:
- to allow for 'cultural diversity in the way that [competence] is determined'
- to take account of the view that 'constellations of differences in the life experiences of adult learners produce distinctive ways of knowing and doing'.

2.56

Read carefully the section of the Framework on the following page.

> What 'local ideologies' (Gee's phrase) are apparent in the framing of the competence statements here?

Critique the Framework in terms of the criteria established in the statement of rationale quoted above. (A summary is found on pp. 30–31 of the publication.)

> Can you find instances where the descriptors of competence do not fully reflect the rationale?

Consider, in particular:

- the ways in which the statements of competence recognise, or fail to recognise, the 'varied, multi-layered and dynamic' character of differences arising from Aboriginality, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic background;

- whether the level of generality at which the statements are pitched encompasses 'the diverse backgrounds, needs and resources of learners and workers, educators and trainers and the various educational, training and community contexts in which these people live and work'.

SYSTEMS COMMUNICATION for interacting in organisations

Stage: Independent Competence

[redacted]

Depending on the context, there is a range of ways in which this competence may be achieved:

By Reflecting on Experience, use language, literacy and numeracy independently to:

- relate prior cultural background and experience to the goals of an organisation.
  e.g. Draw on organisational descriptions to compare and contrast procedures and practices of the organisation with those of previous cultural experience.
  Analyse the relationship between roles, structures and overall objectives of the organisation in relation to cultural experience and expectations.
- relate prior linguistic and mathematical background and experience to the goals of an organisation.
  e.g. Analyse the relationship between roles, structures and overall objectives of the organisation in relation to linguistic and mathematical experience and expectations.

By Engaging in Activities, use language, literacy and numeracy independently to:

- operate within the structures of an organisation to meet its goals.
  e.g. Interpret organisational descriptions of the relationship between organisational roles, structures and overall objectives.
  Initiate organisational forums or meetings.
- contribute responsibly to the culture and objectives of an organisation.
  e.g. Explain and report on functions relevant to meeting organisational goals.
  Communicate information about the organisation in a range of contexts outside the organisation.

By Broadening Applications, use language, literacy and numeracy independently to:

- gain access to knowledge that meets the goals of an organisation.
  e.g. Use a range of information sources to gain additional knowledge about the organisation.
  Inform others inside and outside the organisation about its goals and policy directions.
- deploy new skills that serve the changing needs of an organisation.
  e.g. Explain the characteristics of the organisation's structure, detailing responsibility of those in key positions.

By Critically Reviewing, use language, literacy and numeracy independently to:

- assert rights and entitlements of individuals and groups within an organisation.
  e.g. Analyse and use information about rights, responsibilities and entitlements of individuals and groups within the organisation.
- evaluate organisational performance.
  e.g. Evaluate the policy goals and directions of the organisation in relation to diverse expectations and experience.
  Explain problems encountered in implementing goals and suggest solutions.
  Evaluate personal goals and expectations in relation to organisational goals.

Assessment Consequences of the Framework

2.57

Read through again the statement about the assessment consequences of the *National Framework of AELLN Competence*, which was reproduced on page 128.

2.58

Identify all the main points made in the statement dealing with the assessment consequences of the Framework.

Consider in detail the implications of each main point for your own formulation of learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria and tasks.

Ask yourself, in particular:

- What ideological differences, 'local' or otherwise, are evident between the notions about assessment expressed in the *National Framework* and those expressed in a curriculum document you teach from?
- What role is there for assessment which sorts and grades, for generic or generalised tests, or norm- and criterion-referenced tests?
- Why is 'ensuring comparability' important?
- How will you respond to the concept that 'assessment needs to be holistic and based on complete activities.'
- How do you think this is related to 'competence as a social activity'?
- What does the last statement in the extract above mean, in practical terms? How would you design and implement 'tests of competence [which] assess synthesis, application and relation of practice to theory'?
- How far do the assessment criteria and tasks you normally devise observe the principle that 'competence is inferred from performance'?

Make brief notes of your answers in your journal.

Culture-Bound Assessment

Through reading about the 'new literacy studies' (Gee, and others) during Unit 1 of Module 2 you will have grasped the important reality that literacy must be understood, taught, and learned in close relationship to specific and various sociocultural contexts. As Gee declares:

> Discourse practices are always embedded in the particular world view of particular social groups; they are tied to a set of values and norms. In apprenticing to new social practices, a student becomes complicit with this set of values and norms, this world view.
>
> (Gee 1990, p. 67)

The concepts of competence which underpin the national training reform agenda, on the other hand, and which are advanced by NFROT, tend to be much less relative and context-dependent in character—or at least in the way they are described. The principles of NFROT refer to 'national competencies endorsed by the National Training Board, where they exist' and to 'minimum competency standards for trainers,' and they stipulate that:

> Assessment will measure whether competencies have been gained. These competencies will be developed with input from industry and endorsed by the National Training Board.
>
> (NFROT 1992, p. 11)

These positions are obviously markedly different, although they are not necessarily contradictory or irreconcilable. The contrast between them alerts us to the possibility that descriptions of assessment criteria and tasks in competency based curricula with a vocational orientation may be couched in apparently 'neutral' or 'objective' language which masks the ways in which the descriptions are, in fact, culturally based.

For example, the performance criteria for Element of Competence 2.1, 'Writing for Self Expression', in the Victorian Certificates of General Education for Adults include:

1. Combine 2 to 4 personally familiar events, ideas or experiences.
2. Refer to some external factors, including other times and places.
5. Write a coherent paragraph linked by language devices of time.
7. Use standard grammar spasmodically.

These criteria refer explicitly to the notion of Standard Written English which Lemke (1990) challenges, and they make assumptions that the learners will understand and value self- expression and time-based (linear/sequential) coherence in narrative in the same way and to the same extent as do the authors of the curriculum. This is not true for all people. For example, it is clear from Harris (1990) that Aboriginal people hold a different world view and set of values from those of the dominant social group in Australia.

2.59

Examine in detail the statements of competence and the related assessment criteria and tasks in an ALBE course for which you have access to the full course documentation.

> What evidence do you find of influence from dominant discourses in society, in Gee's sense of the term, or other sociocultural factors?
>
> Are these factors acknowledged in any way?
>
> Should you counter the influence of these factors in your teaching and assessing practice and if so, how could you go about it?

Unit 3
Assessment of student learning

Section C
Models of the assessment process

The final section of Module 2 is concerned with procedures for monitoring learning. Participants will have the opportunity to apply the theoretical understanding of adult literacy assessment, and the critical perspectives they have gained from the earlier parts of Module 2 to the development and implementation of personal guidelines for assessment practice.

Learning activities

The ACAL Assessment Principles

The Australian Council of Adult Literacy (ACAL) adopted and promulgated in mid-1992 twelve principles of assessment in adult literacy and basic education.

1. Assessment should be multi-dimensional, that is tap attitudes, knowledge, processes and skills with multiple measures acknowledging the complex nature of literacy.
2. Assessment tools and reporting mechanisms should be developed in conjunction with and be informed by curriculum frameworks, specific contexts and articulation processes.
3. Assessment should be continuous and integral to the teaching/learning process (and the curriculum). The process should be costed separately, i.e. identified in funding submissions.
4. Assessment tools need to be based on consistent and appropriate theories which make explicit relationships between language and the sociocultural context and use authentic and relevant texts and tasks.
5. Assessment procedures (tools, etc.) should be regularly reviewed (validity, reliability, appropriate use).
6. Assessment should be a collaborative process carried out in an environment conducive to allowing students maximum opportunity to demonstrate ability. The rights, needs, sensibilities and integrity of the individual are the prime consideration.

7. The purpose of the assessment must be explicit and clear to all stakeholders: the student, the assessor and whoever commissions the assessment,
8. Reporting systems must be understandable and accessible and to some extent standardised.
9. There should be different kinds of reporting mechanisms for different stakeholders.
10. The duration of the assessment report should be specified.
11. Assessors should have appropriate training.
12. The 'accreditation' or 'registration' of assessors should be supported.

2.60

Note in your journal the points of agreement between this framework for assessment practice and the key assessment principles of the *National Framework of AELLN Competence.*

Note also the common ground with the views of Gee, Lemke and Delpit.

2.61

Draft a set of basic guidelines you could use in devising assessment criteria and tasks with the ACAL principles as your base, and with reference back to the work you completed in the other sections of this unit.

Apply these guidelines to preparing one assessment task appropriate to the learning outcomes of the next unit you are about to teach.

Assessment Variables in the National Framework

*Discussion of the **National Framework of AELLN Competence** in Unit 2 held over consideration of two very important components, because they relate more closely to curriculum planning and to the implementation of assessment principles and the development of practical models for assessing student achievement than they do to the sociocultural contexts of communicative competence.*

The components referred to are the variables or principles of Complexity and Familiarity.

> Four main factors influence the complexity of a text or task.
>
> - *Technicality*: how specialised is the language being used;
> - *Abstraction*: how far a text or task is removed from the immediate experience of the student;
> - *Orientation*, or *function*: how a text or task in intended to affect others, and
> - *Performance strategies*: strategies required for producing texts or completing tasks.
>
> …
>
> The second major variable, familiarity, focuses on the way that learners' backgrounds relate to what they have to do. Does this background, based on the linguistic, mathematical, cultural and social history of the learner, match up with the demands of the tasks or texts at hand?
>
> How familiar is the learner with:
>
> - the degree of technicality in the text or task?
> - the degree of abstraction in the text or task?
> - the orientation of the text or task?
> - performance strategies for producing the text or completing the task?
>
> The learner's familiarity with the language and mathematical code is an important factor.
>
> (*National Framework of AELLN Competence* 1994, pp. 20, 22)

The essential aspects of the principles may be expressed in the form of a matrix.

	Complexity	*Familiarity*
Technicality		
Abstraction		
Orientation or function		
Performance strategies		

2.62

Read the full discussion of the principles of Complexity and Familiarity in the Framework and reflect in your journal on the application of the principles in the descriptions of competence.

2.62

Review the guidelines and the assessment criteria and tasks you drafted under 2.65 in the light of your consideration of the principles.

What improvements would you now make?

2.63

Explore the usefulness of the matrix summary as:

- a check list for reviewing the range, appropriateness and level of difficulty of assessment tasks;

- a guide to help ensure that assessment tasks strike a proper balance between stretching their abilities and sustaining their confidence.

Approaches to Assessment

Geoff Brindley (1989), discusses a large number of approaches to assessment, with particular reference to the teaching and assessing of achievement levels by students of English as a second language. The following pages contain diagrammatic outlines of two illustrative approaches, briefly summarised below, which might provide useful starting points for your development of a model or models appropriate to your particular teaching and learning situation.

Table 3: Teachers' Methods of Assessing Achievement

This is a summary of the findings made by the AMEP Research Coordinating Committee's survey of assessment practices. Brindley notes that teachers' ratings of the usefulness of certain methods is higher than their frequency of use—especially in the case of learner self-assessment and feedback from outsiders. The survey found that problems with organisation and resources tended to militate against greater use of these approaches.

Figure 25: Profile Report

This is an example of an assessment profile. It was developed in London by the City and Guilds Institute and the Manpower Services Commission to describe the performance of trainee instructors in a program for unemployed youth. Four other basic skills areas were similarly described and measured. The objectives in the Profile constitute criteria for assessment of communication, and they are linked in turn to a system of graded levels of achievement. The Profile incorporates both self-assessment and external assessment of performance.

It should be noted that the approaches presented by Brindley mainly involve criterion-referenced assessment. The statement on the Assessment Consequences of the Framework expressed some caution, stressing that both criterion- and norm-referenced assessment should not be used as the sole basis for inferring competence from performance. Also the descriptors of assessment criteria, particularly in the City and Guilds' Profile Report, do not use the constructs of competency based training.

With these reservations the two approaches, and others described in Brindley's study, are useful because they are very practical in their orientation and they suggest ways of implementing non-standard assessment procedures, such as self-assessment by learners.

2.63

Analyse the findings on teachers' methods of assessing achievement contained in Brindley's Table 3.

> Does your own experience in teaching, and in monitoring and assessing student learning lead you to agree with the Perceived Utility rating for each assessment method listed, from the ALBE perspective?
>
> Would you expect different statistics in the column, Frequency of Use, if the survey were administered to teachers of ESB adult literacy?

2.64

Use the list of methods in Brindley's Table 3 as a basis for building as much variety as possible into your drafting of assessment procedures for your own use.

> How free are you to use all the methods listed, for example, in terms of factors such as your students' expectations, the culture of your workplace or curriculum specifications?
>
> Are you aware of any methods appropriate for the assessment of achievement by ESB adult literacy students which are not listed in Table 3? If so, share this information with your study group.

TABLE 3. *Teachers' Methods of Assessing Achievement (n = 131)*

	FREQUENCY OF USE (%)					PERCEIVED UTILITY (%)				
Method	V.Low	Low	Medium	High	V.High	V.Low	Low	Medium	High	V.High
Observation and recycling of work	2.6	7.0	17.4	31.3	41.7	1.8	7.1	15.9	31.0	44.2
Informal discussion with learners	17.8	15.0	24.8	21.2	21.2	5.5	11.9	36.7	20.2	25.7
Teacher-made tests	38.8	15.5	29.3	8.6	7.8	28.9	20.7	29.7	12.6	8.1
Learner self-assessment procedures	33.2	19.5	24.3	14.2	8.8	22.2	16.2	27.3	20.4	13.9
Teacher journal	53.2	12.6	13.5	13.5	7.2	40.5	14.2	15.1	16.0	14.2
Learner journal	68.1	18.4	9.7	1.9	1.9	47.9	17.0	14.9	13.8	6.4
Oral proficiency rating	21.3	11.1	21.3	24.5	21.8	22.2	13.9	24.1	24.1	15.7
Feedback from outsiders	50.0	12.7	15.4	14.6	7.3	31.2	11.2	22.3	17.1	18.1
Standardised tests	83.4	10.4	3.1	2.1	1.0	71.8	20.9	3.1	2.1	2.1

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FIGURE 25. ***Profile Report*** **(Thompson 1986)**

PROFILE - COMMUNICATION SKILLS

NAME ....

OBJECTIVES The trainee instructor/supervisor should be able to:	Profile		Grade	Tutor's Observations
	1	2	3	
1. recognize problems experienced by his trainees in written and oral communications;	Recognizes some problems, but has difficulties in offering remedies.	Recognizes several, but not all problems; will succeed at most attempts at correction.	Makes full identification all problems, and offers realistic and helpful solutions.	
Mark present status	▨			
2. demonstrate different ways in which effective communication may be achieved;	Has some difficulty in appreciating different methods of effective communication.	Uses a fair range of methods, occasionally inappropriate.	Good demonstration of wide range of communication methods.	
Mark present status	▨			
3. identify the purpose and importance of vocabulary, accent, style and form in communication;	Pays only some attention to the importance of these factors.	Recognizes the importance of some factors, but does not use them fully.	Stresses fully the importance of these factors, and uses variations as appropriate.	
Mark present status	▨			
4. identify appropriate forms of speech and writing for use in his own structuring/supervisory situations;	Has some difficulty in choosing appropriate forms for day-to-day occasions.	Chooses appropriate form on most occasions all – some difficulties in style.	Uses realistic and appropriate styles on occasions.	
Mark present status	▨			
5. use of a wide range verbal, non-verbal and visual methods of communication in his own instructing/supervising situations.	Relies on a limited range of methods, with little understanding of student difficulties.	Uses a moderate range of methods, but lacks some skill in modifying them to meet student need.	Uses a full range of communication methods effectively to the students' advantage.	
Mark present status	▨	▨		
6. demonstrate ways of helping his trainees to communicate effectively.	Makes only a limited effort to help trainees with communication problems.	Makes a fair effort to encourage communication.	Makes a sustained effort to encourage trainees to communicate effectively.	
Mark present status	▨	▨		

2.65

Devise a profile format, based on Brindley's Figure 25 but using competency based descriptors of competence and learning outcomes and assessment criteria which your students might be able to use for self-assessment purposes.

What will you do about the grading from 1 to 3 in the Profile? How comfortable are you with the notion of assessing and reporting numerically on the degree to which a student achieves a particular literacy competence, i.e. giving a grade?

What are the differences between the concept of 'grades' here and the concepts of 'stages' and 'phases' in the National Framework?

A Comprehensive Model for Assessment

2.66

Read the following extracts from Loacker (1986) which describe conceptual elements of assessment, and guidelines for developing assessments, from the perspectives adopted by the Assessment Council of the Alverno College in Wisconsin, USA.

> **Conceptual Elements of Assessment**
>
> Every teacher has had the experience of hearing some version of the young Helen Keller's cry of "Water", the experience of discovering a student's sudden illumination or success. And once having heard it, who does not wish to find a way of making it more frequent, more developmental and more characteristic of every student? Teachers need to find ways to build on, and expand, moments of learning for all students, rather than merely rewarding them.
>
> Assessment becomes a meaningful way to expand learning when one defines it to include a set of key elements that make it a learning experience. It provides a way of refocusing education on individual learners instead of using a wide lens on an indistinguishable mass from which we can infer only general patterns. Since students are grouped in courses, the idea of using assessment as a camera that takes individual portraits instead of group pictures requires explanation. It is essential that a dynamic, cumulative, and composite picture of a student's abilities be made visible to everyone responsible for the student's learning—including the student.
>
> To create such a picture, assessment needs to be defined to include multidimensional sampling of student's abilities in action, observation and judgment of those samples on

the basis of explicit criteria and structured feedback administered sequentially in relation to a learner's development. Each of these elements in turn must contribute to the growth of students' abilities to assess themselves.

Sampling Student Performance

Observing a student in action brings us a close to an individual's ability as we can get. Because we cannot observe all of a person's expressions of a given ability we take intermittent samples. Given the complexity of the human being, there will always be a distance between behavioral data and the ability itself. Even a very precise image of exactly a detective has gone about solving a mystery offers a very limited view of his or her full detecting powers. Sampling is at least a start towards developing a picture of an ability in operation ...

Observation

Assessment calls forth from teachers their keenest powers of observation. It depends on their ability to set aside tendencies to quantify and rank, or to eliminate possible alternatives. An effective assessor looks at what is happening behaviorally—at a student drawing conclusions, for example whether at a podium or in a paper. Such observation involves attention to parts in precise relationship to each other and to a whole, including emphasis and proportion. It involves adopting an open framework to preclude any tendency one might have to look only for error or to be biased by a single expectation.

Such a framework is built on the criteria of performance that one gradually develops from experience—by reflecting on good performances and attempting to articulate the basis for one's judgment. That framework represents an increasingly expansive understanding of an ability. One important aspect of that understanding is recognising the limits of the framework: as an organization of criteria of performance it never fully describes the ability. It allows, however, a range of varied expressions and styles that contribute to the overall effectiveness of student performance and to the uniqueness of individual ability. In presenting conclusions from experience, for example, some learners begin with detailed descriptions of their experience and then abstract general principles. Other learners initially seize upon general principles and the accumulate evidence to support them. The effectiveness of the former lies in the ability to engage readers' or listeners' minds with the immediate before leading them to the abstract. The effectiveness of the latter lies in the ability to set forth points with clarity and gradually convince with supporting evidence ...

Judgment and Explicit Criteria

The experience of faculty as expert judges of student ability is an important reason for placing them at the centre of any educational assessment process. Even faculty who have never verbalized their standards and who might use a norm-referenced framework to report their judgments, work from an implicit understanding of what they expect in student performance. Assessment requires them to articulate that understanding in explicit and public statements of criteria of performance. By doing so, faculty refine their own understanding of expected abilities, clarify for their own colleagues the basis of their judgment and enable students to understand what performance is required.

Explicit criteria provide a major means of getting a picture of an ability for they serve as indicators of that ability as seen in performance. Thus they are one of the components of assessment that distinguish it as learning. The picture sketched by criteria should be sufficient to enable the assessor to judge the presence of an ability. It also needs to be clear enough for the beginning learner to imagine a performance that would match the criteria ...

Research on Criteria

Perhaps the most persistent question about explicit criteria of performance is how specific they should be. Our research at Alverno College suggests that the context of the developmental level of the student is a significant determinant of the degree of specificity ...

Sequential Administration

Assessment can serve learners best when they carry a developing picture of their abilities from one assessment situation to the next. Students can make some of those connections for themselves when faculty identify what is to be assessed, what criteria will be used to judge it, and how well it has been done. But once learners know how well they have done in one assessment situation, and have an idea of how they might improve, they need opportunities to demonstrate their improvement ...

Feedback

For assessment to be learning, feedback is critical. Feedback offers the teachable moment, the opportunity for change. It takes the elements of assessment discussed thus far and turns them into learning. It can be seen as both a resource and an event. As a resource, it is information provided by the assessor, and in some cases by the assessment itself, which presents a profile of how the learner in action meets criteria of effectiveness. As an event, feedback is the time when the learner and assessor "sit down beside each other" and direct their attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the learner's performance ...

Research on Feedback

Good teachers know that to be effective, feedback should be timely, informative, explicit, focused on what can be changed, and generally positive in nature. Still, they might ask how explicit feedback should be. Should negative feedback be given, and if so, when? What level and amount of information constitutes optimal knowledge of results? ...

Self-Assessment

The ability to appraise one's own performance is not an automatic culmination of the learning process. To develop autonomy as learners, students must gradually try out strategies for achieving distance from their performance and applying criteria to it. Therefore, the ability to self-assess should be an essential component of the assessment process and an important part of each individual assessment.

Assisting learners to develop the ability to self-assess is a multi-dimensional process. It means teaching them to observe themselves in action. It requires students to develop the habit of asking what these observations mean about their own behavior and the underlying array of expectations, knowledges and abilities that these behaviors represent. It asks students to make judgments about the effectiveness of their behavior in reference to a set of standards or criteria rather than making comparisons to the work of peers. Finally, developing complex self-assessment ability involves learners in finding more effective, yet distinct models of performance that can serve as behavioral alternatives for future development.

Developing an Assessment: Guidelines for Faculty

How does one go about developing an assessment of the kind that we have been describing? And who is the "one" to develop it? How can one do so, particularly in light of the specific content of a course, discipline, or general education program, the particular level of student to be assessed, and the creative intelligence of a teacher? The process of assessment design is complex, as complex as the situation with which a faculty member deals whenever designing a learning experience or system. In order to make the process accessible, therefore, we will deal with it in an inductive fashion, working through the elements as any teacher might, and translate them into a design for developing assessments.

Who is the "one" who develops assessment? In defining assessment as an educational process we have stressed that it includes not only a specific evaluative event, but also the ongoing relationship between teacher and student and the even more cumulative sense of a student's overall development across the curriculum.

Designing Individual Classroom Assessments

Let us imagine any teacher ready to design an assessment and thinking aloud: I take as a basic working assumption that my aim is to *sample* my students' abilities and to provide *multiple opportunities* for that sampling. The method that I follow is not a rigid series of steps, but a logical pattern in relation to the elements of assessment. I begin by determining the outcome I expect—the ability I want my students to demonstrate. At some point, I have to determine a stimulus and context, and designs for feedback and self-assessment. Beyond any individual assessment, I consider how each assessment experience relates to the ongoing development of the student, especially in relation to other assessments in my course …

1. DETERMINE A SPECIFIC ABILITY OR EXPECTED OUTCOME

A major assumption underlying assessment, as distinct from traditional testing, is that learning—and by extension, assessment of that learning—should be designed to foster the growth of student abilities in significant areas beyond the acquisition of knowledge …

2. IDENTIFY COMPONENT ABILITIES

Because the ability is a complex one, I need to break it open into component abilities. That step moves me towards the criteria to be used in judging it. In this case it means that my assessment of it does not occur in only one event …

In effect, broader goals need to be broken open and spread on a continuum of development. For the beginning student, I set more specific skills to be developed. In an advanced literature course I would not assess students specifically for their ability to use the vocabulary of the discipline, although I presume this ability and in fact use it as a criterion for assessing a broader goal.

To determine an expected outcome for an assessment, then, an instructor needs to state an ability in relation to the learning content, the course context, the developmental level of the student and the chronology of the assessment event.

3. SELECT OR DESIGN A STIMULUS OR CONTEXT

Although there are those educators who still bristle at the word "stimulus", it usefully describes that element of assessment that elicits a student's performance. A stimulus might be a question asked, or an artefact presented for analysis, or a problem posed, or an event experienced. It might be a simple request for a choice of answers or it might be a complex situation in which possibilities for response are numerous.

Whether I choose a stimulus first and create a context for it, or begin with a context and then find an appropriate stimulus, I ask several questions. *How will I narrow the context to a concrete situation?* Will I be assigning specific texts, or events, or problems? A process or product or both? Will I ask the student to choose the specific content? How will I limit the choices the student has to make? *What do I want students to do with the content to show the ability? ... By what circumstances will I define limitations? ... What will prompt them to do it?* How will I motivate my students to demonstrate all that they've mastered? ...

4. DEVELOP CRITERIA

Whether one sees criteria as the standards by which one judges student performance or as the indicators of reasoning, judgment, values and purposes by which one fills in their picture of a given ability, the process of developing them means inferring them from performances as experienced and remembered. In designing an assessment a teacher will have in mind an "ideal performance". Though perhaps not consciously spelled out, it is part of the inspiration for the need for assessment.

My job as assessment designer, then, is to determine criteria by describing that ideal performance, distinguishing essentials and generalising enough to accommodate varied styles and varied qualities of performance ...

5. PROVIDE FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

If I aim to help my students take responsibility for their own development I include a dimension beyond their demonstration of a given ability. I ask them to evaluate that demonstration. By designing criteria, I have provided them with the most important tools for self-assessment. But I still need to provide a time and a stimulus/format for self-assessment. I might include an overall question about the performance or a set of detailed questions about specific aspects of the performance. I might make self-assessment a formal part of the instrument or provide for it more informally through directive suggestions or questions.

> Again, the key determining factors for my decisions are the level of the student and the context of the specific assessment. Where is the student in the development of his or her ability to self-assess? How does she use criteria? Does she have an internalized set? Does she have at least the start of a picture of her own strengths and weaknesses in regard to what is being assessed …
>
> 6. JUDGE THE PERFORMANCE AND GIVE FEEDBACK
>
> Judging performance and giving structured feedback constitute major elements of the assessment design. For the student, these may indeed be the most significant since judgment and feedback are the visible signs of student progress, or the lack of it. In the assessment design process we have been describing, judgment of the performance is a direct application of developing explicit criteria. As an assessor, I make observations of my student's performance and either record examples of the behavior I observe or at least mentally acknowledge them. On the basis of such evidence, I then judge the student's performance as it meets the criteria I have established. In the context of a course, I would also relate the student's performance to overall development of my course goals. When designing an assessment, I should think ahead to how, within the limitations of my time, I can provide feedback that will most benefit the students … Whatever mode I choose, I generate feedback that provides students with a description of how they have performed. I describe for the student the successes that I find in the performance even as I make suggestions for ways the performance can be improved.
>
> Loacker et al. pp. 49–58..

The first section outlines a basic model of the components of assessment:

- sampling student performance: multiple and varied
- provision for self-assessment
- observation
- judgment
- explicit criteria
- sequential administration and
- feedback.

The second section offers a generalised but comprehensive model of the flow of the assessment process. The following essential elements are incorporated:

- ability (being assessed)
- components (of the ability)
- instrument (of assessment): stimulus and context
- criteria
- performance (the activity on which the assessment is based)
- judgment by assessors (including self)
- feedback and
- evaluation.

The model is geared to higher education in the United States and it makes no explicit mention of competency based training. Yet it provides a fully articulated skeleton on which to flesh out a detailed personal approach to the assessment of student learning in adult English language, literacy and numeracy courses. Such a model should encompass all the major contributing developments in national policy and strategic planning for vocational education and training with which this unit has been concerned.

2.66

Revise and improve your assessment draft in terms of this model and so conclude your work on the Curriculum Areas and Issues module.

Adult LITERACY *Teaching*

A flexible delivery program

Module 3

Program development

Module 3
Program development

Outline of structure and requirements

Module purpose

This module focuses on the planning, delivery and evaluation of teaching/learning units by the participants, in their actual training and educational settings, under their normal working conditions. The appropriate frameworks for this activity are provided by investigations into relevant theories and practices regarding both curriculum development and program evaluation. This will also involve thinking back over the learning content of the other modules of the course.

Nominal duration	30 – 35 hours
Prerequisites	There are no prerequisite modules.

Module contents

Unit 1 Curriculum theories and practice

Unit 2 Evaluation

Section A *Objectives and issues in program evaluation*
Section B *Methods for evaluating curriculum*

Unit 3 Practical project

Assessment strategy As set out in the Course Curriculum

Learning outcomes details

It is strongly recommended that each learning outcome be the focus of a group discussion in either face to face mode or via teleconferencing or video-conferencing, at a time and place negotiated between the course presenter and participants.

Learning outcome 1

Participants will be able to establish a model for program development in the light of investigations into current theories and practices of curriculum relevant to the ALBE field.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:
1.1 analyse the process of curriculum development
1.2 describe the place of curriculum development within their own teaching practice.

Learning outcome 2

Participants will be able to use a model of curriculum evaluation in the light of current theories and practices of program evaluation.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:
2.1 analyse the purposes and content of program evaluation, with specific focus on issues in the evaluation of curriculum;
2.2 select appropriate criteria and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of a particular unit of teaching/learning.

Learning outcome 3

Participants will be able to design, implement, and evaluate a substantial unit of teaching/learning.

Assessment criteria

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:
3.1 design and deliver a substantial teaching/learning unit including
  - monitoring the learning of students and
  - assessing achievement of the learning outcomes;
3.2 evaluate the unit in terms of appropriate criteria and evaluation procedures.

Conditions

Participants will explore and reflect upon current theories and issues affecting adult literacy and basic education, and on their own professional practice, by

- reviewing the readings provided, with guidance from the learning activities suggested in the module;

- discussing their ideas and concerns with one or more fellow learners as far as possible and/or with the course presenter;
- recording their reflections, notes on readings completed, points raised in discussion etc in a journal;
- planning and carrying out their Practical Project;
- completing written essay-type tasks including the report of their Practical Project.

Assessment methods

Assessment tasks and conditions should be negotiated by the course presenter with each participant; generally, a mix of journal entries (as self assessment), participation in group discussions and written tasks.

Participants who elect for their Practical Project to be 100% of the formal assessment, i.e. Option 1, will not have to write any other essay material.

Those who have elected Option 5 should submit their essay-type assessment task for Module 3 at an agreed time after the module is completed. (Options 1 to 5 are set out in the Course Curriculum, page 6.)

Practical Project (either 2500 words or 5000 words according to the size of the unit of work undertaken):

1 A description of a unit of teaching/learning designed, delivered, and evaluated in an actual adult literacy and basic education setting.

Analysed examples of student work should be included.

2 A report on the processes followed in designing, delivering, and evaluating the unit.

Essay-type task for Module 3:

Option 5: a short essay or paper as negotiated for this module (together with similar tasks for the other modules, as chosen).

Participants must present written material in hard copy even if it is word-processed because of difficulties the presenter may encounter in accessing material form computer disks.

Participants who wish to include audio-tapes, video-tapes or computer disk material integrated with the presentation of their assessment tasks should discuss with the presenter any adjustments to be made to the length of their essays or papers.

Other options for assessment of this module and the course can be negotiated with the course presenter.

Highly recommended resources

ACTRAC (1994) *National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence: Application to adult basic education curriculum development*. ACTRAC Products, Frankston, Vic.

Berk R. & Rossi P. (1990) *Thinking about Program Evaluation*. Sage Publications, California (especially Chapter 2, 'Key Concepts in Evaluation Research').

Brookfield S. (1986) *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A comprehensive analysis of principles and effective practices*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco (especially Chapter 12, 'Facilitating learning: towards guidelines for good practice').

Caulley D. (1989) 'Towards a Short Introductory Overview of Program Evaluation', *Australasian Evaluation Society*, Vol. 4, pp. 15–17.

Coates S., Fitzpatrick L., McKenna A. & Makin A. (1995) *National Reporting System*. Adult Community and Further Education Division, OTFE, Victoria.

Evans D. (1990) 'Working Towards User-friendly Evaluation.' *Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education, No. 7, pp. 10–11.*

Lambert F. & Owen J. (1993) *A Guide to Program Evaluation*. DEET, Canberra.
This book is supplied as an integral part of the NSDC program,
'Professional Development for Program Evaluation' (1995).

McHugh M. (1994) 'Exposing Stereotypes about Clients: the CES Literacy Awareness Workshop.' *Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education,* No. 23, pp. 12–14.

Marginson S. (1993) *Arts, Science and Work: Evaluations and investigations program*, DEET. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Onore C. and Lubetsky B. (1992) 'Why we learn is what and how we learn: curriculum as possibility,' in G. Boomer, N. Lester, C. Onore & J. Cook (eds) *Negotiating the Curriculum*, The Falmer Press, London, pp. 253–265.

Shore S., Black A., Simpson A. & Coombe M. (1993) *Positively Different: Guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language and numeracy curricula*. Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra (especially Chapter 1, 'Theory informing inclusive curriculum').

Simmons J. (1992) 'The missing C's.' *Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education,* No. 17, pp. 8–9.

Smith D. & Lovat T. (1991) *Curriculum: Action on reflection*. rev. edn., Social Science Press, Wentworth Falls, NSW (especially Chapter 10, 'Measurement, Assessment and Evaluation').

Thompson M. (1992) 'Evaluation and accountability'. Paper presented at the Literacy and Industry: Partners in Productivity Conference, Adelaide. Workplace Equity Unit, Department of Industrial Relations, Canberra.

Thompson P. (1991) *Competency Based Training: Some developmental and assessment issues for policy makers*. Department of Technical and Further Education, Adelaide.

Suggested additional resources

Biggs J. (1994) 'Learning Outcomes: Competence or expertise?' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research*. Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 1–18.

Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education. (1990) No. 7. 'Assessment and Evaluation.'

Guba E. & Lincoln Y. (1982) *Effective Evaluation: Improving the usefulness of evaluation results through responsive and naturalistic approaches*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Ince R. (1990) *Program Evaluation and Review*. Government Management Board, Adelaide.

Kemmis S. & McTaggart R. (eds) (1988) *The Action Research Planner*, 3rd edn. Deakin University, Geelong.

Kindler J. (1992) *Managing Progress: A staff development package on evaluation in adult literacy and basic education*. Adult Community and Further Education Board, Melbourne.

National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1992) *Curriculum Initiatives*. Commissioned Report No. 12. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Owen J. (1993) *Program Evaluation: Forms and approaches*. Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

Print M. (1988) *Curriculum Development and Design*. Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

Scriven M. (1991) *Evaluation Thesaurus*, 4th edn. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California.

Wadsworth Y. (1991) *Everyday Evaluation on the Run*. Action Research Issues Association, Melbourne.

Module 3
Program development

Introduction

This module gives you the opportunity to explore in a practical way how to organise teaching/learning experiences, building on your knowledge and skills in curriculum development and evaluation—the main content of this module. It takes into account your understanding of adult learners and adult learning and theories of language and literacy learning—the main content of the other two modules. In that sense, this module in Program Development, especially its Practical Project unit, will be the culmination of the professional learning you achieve during the **Adult Literacy Teaching** *course and will enable you to take that learning forward into your continuing practice.*

As has been stressed repeatedly, the course is flexible. Even though this module is presented as the third in a logical sequence, it may suit your needs and circumstances better, or those of your participants' group or your workplace, for you to begin **Adult Literacy Teaching** *with the first two units of Module 3 and then to undertake the other two modules.*

However, Unit 3 of Module 3 must not be commenced until all other units and modules of the course have been completed. This means that the Practical Project will be based on your learning throughout the whole course.

Unit 1 *focuses on the theory and practice of curriculum development. It considers such questions as:*

- *What is curriculum?*
- *How does our understanding of the curriculum process help frame our teaching?*
- *How do we critique current orthodoxies?*
- *What implications do the answers have for my teaching?*

Unit 2 *is concerned primarily with the objectives and issues involved in the evaluation of curriculum and with evaluation methods. It focuses on the evaluation of teaching practice, including the measurement of learning outcomes and the effectiveness of both the curriculum and the teacher. It also considers broader questions of quality in program delivery and the evaluation of whole institutional programs.*

Unit 3 *is the Practical Project which concludes the course.*

Unit 1
The theory and process of curriculum development

> When a curriculum document is implemented in an educational institution with an educational program … interaction takes place between the document, learners and instruction such that modification occurs and a 'curriculum' emerges.
>
> (Print 1988, p. 4)

This unit begins with conceptualisation of curriculum and the processes by which it is developed and implemented. As suggested by the lead-off quotation, emphasis is given to the dynamic, interactive character of adult literacy teaching.

Learning activities

Concepts of Curriculum

3.1

Read through and reflect on the following definitions of curriculum.

> 1 … the hidden and overt structures and processes as well as the content or method which impacts upon the educational experience of the learner. Curriculum is much more than a syllabus or an outline of what is to be taught. The definition used … encompasses considerations such as:
>
> - who is taught?
> - what priorities or target groups are involved?
> - how are students selected?
> - by what methods are students placed in classes?
> - what are the intentions or goals of the curriculum?
> - what learning resources are available for curriculum implementation?
> - what facilities are available for implementation of the curriculum?
> - which teachers are used in the courses offered?
> - what training and support have teachers had?
> - what policy framework is shaping the curriculum?
> - what is the source of funding for the provision and what is the impact does this have on the curriculum?
> - what accountability requirements are in place for reporting on the outcomes?
>
> (*An Emerging National Curriculum*, NSW TAFE, 1992, p. 13)

2 Curriculum is all the learning experiences students have within a course and the experiences and decisions that impact on their learning in the course.

(Shore et al. 1993, p. 23)

3 Curriculum can represent a coming together of understandings of the social and cultural relationships in the larger world, the reformation of relationships within the classroom, and the organised bodies of knowledge called subject matter.

(Onore & Lubetsky, 1992, p. 255)

4 Curriculum is an area of vital importance to the professional teacher. It is after all the very substance of schooling and the raison d'être for teachers in schools. When teachers consider curriculum issues, they tackle the substantive matter of schooling and this may be expressed in terms of the fundamental questions of curriculum, namely:

- What to teach?
- How to teach?
- When to teach?
- What is the impact of teaching?

(Print, 1988, p. 1)

5 It is important educators realise that curriculum is a manipulative strategy. When questions are posed about *what* students will learn, *when*, *how* and under *what conditions*, one is asking curriculum questions. However, these questions may be resolved in very different ways and the results of the answers to those questions become the basis for the written curriculum. Therefore, in a broad sense, what students learn ... is the result of what certain people want them to learn, that is, the answer to the questions above.

(Print, 1988, p. 9)

3.2

Summarise in your journal the different aspects of curriculum each of these extracts seems to emphasise.

Can you identify the underlying principles or beliefs in the extracts? What is the main perspective of each author?

What principles or beliefs do the authors share?

What elements do all the definitions have in common? Do you think these are the most important aspects of what they are describing?

Which definition do you consider to be closest to the organising framework and educational thinking that guide and inform the day-to-day activities you carry out with your students?

What elements in the first definition are not in the other definitions?

How important is it to include these elements in planning curriculum?

> Is it significant that the first definition comes from a report titled *An Emerging* ***National*** *Curriculum* (emphasis added)?

Read in full Shore et al. (1993), Chapter 1, which is provided as Reading 3A.

3.3

Discuss with your study group, work colleagues and/or the course presenter the meaning and implications of Print's remark that 'curriculum is a manipulative strategy.'

> What evidence can you draw from your own learning experiences to support your views?

Thinking About Teaching Purpose

Many curriculum theorists or developers focus in one way or another on the centrality of purpose in organising teaching, learning, assessing and evaluating experiences and activities into a curriculum. However it is done, and whatever educational or other ideologies guide and inform the process and however they colour the outcomes, defining the objectives is seen to be a vital component, and commonly the starting point.

3.4

Conduct a group exercise to try to build a common understanding of:

- theories about teaching and learning which reinforce the importance of setting learning outcomes;
- differences in the kinds of outcomes that might be defined for a course;
- the relationship between the setting of learning outcomes for students and the measurement of their learning outcomes;
- ways of structuring and organising teaching and learning experiences that address learning outcomes.

Each member of the group takes responsibility for
– choosing one particular concept or issue they have considered and
– consulting and reporting back.

Issues in Setting Objectives

The following extract is reproduced from Chapter 2 of Geoff Brindley's book (1989) ***Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum,*** *which is included in the Readings for Module 2 (see Reading 2E).*

THE ROLE OF OBJECTIVES

Closely linked to the debate concerning the appropriateness of 'input-output' models of programme evaluation is the question of the role of objectives in educational planning. It is a commonplace to point out that one cannot assess without having stated what it actually is that one is going to assess. In other words, it is necessary to establish clear criteria for assessment, which would need to be derived from some sort of statement of objectives.

Nevertheless, a good deal of agreement persists in educational circles about the form in which objectives should be couched. In the context of this debate, the main question is the value of stating objectives in specific and behavioural terms.

Behavioural objectives in program planning

As every teacher knows, one way of planning a course or unit of instruction is to begin with a specification of objectives, setting out then learner's desired 'terminal behaviour' in the form of the traditional three-part behavioural or performance objective (Mager, 1962), which states the **performance** (what the learner will actually do), the conditions (under what conditions the performance will occur) and the standards (the degree of the learner's skill to be demonstrated)...'

The arguments which have been put forward in favour of the use of behavioural objectives are usually along the following lines:

1. They let everyone who is involved in the learning process know what the intended outcomes of learning are. This provides a sense of purpose and a direction for the programme.
2. They provide a criterion against which to judge learning. Achievement can thus be measured in relation to goals.
3. They enable learners to have a more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course.
4. They enable teachers to say what they do.
5. They provide a basis for the individualisation of instruction.
6. The use of objectives means that the development of skills can be seen as a gradual rather than an all-or- nothing process.

(Brindley, 1989, pp. 4–5)

Brindley goes on to list several objections to the behavioural approach from the perspective of teaching and learning English as a second language:

- Trivial learning behaviours are the easiest to operationalise, so really important outcomes of education will be under emphasised.
- Pre-specification of learning goals prevents the teacher from taking advantage of instructional opportunities occurring unexpectedly in the classroom and stifles teacher creativity.
- Besides student behavioural change, there are other types of educational outcomes which are important, such as attitude changes.
- The approach is mechanistic and dehumanising. (The language in which objectives are couched - for example, 'The learner will demonstrate skill x,' etc. - often seems to teachers to reflect a view of the learner as merely a 'skill-getter' rather than a 'whole person.')
- It is undemocratic to plan in advance how learners are to behave after instruction.
- Good teachers do not use behavioural objectives to plan.
- Measurability implies accountability - this might lead to teachers being judged on their ability to bring about desirable changes in the learner.
- Objectives are difficult to generate.

(Brindley 1989, pp. 5-6)

3.5

Reflect on the two opposing sets of views summarised by Brindley about setting objectives for learners of English as a second language, and discuss them with colleagues.

Are the various opinions cited by Brindley, whether supporting the use of behavioural objectives or objecting to them, equally valid for the teaching and learning of adult literacy and numeracy programs as they are for ESL programs?

Brindley's focus is on *behavioural* objectives. From your earlier work, what other kinds of objectives might be used to overcome his objections?

What limits would you want to impose on the setting of learning objectives and their use as focal criteria in measuring the learning outcomes for students? For example, are objectives appropriate at the whole course or module level, but less so at the level of individual units within modules?

What role do objectives set by teachers play in planning and delivering particular learning experiences to adult students?

Learning Objectives or Tasks?

Opponents of setting behavioural objectives, cited by Brindley, put the argument that teachers generally do not think in terms of specific learner outcomes. They are more concerned with providing meaningful and stimulating learning activities:

> If teachers do not think in terms of specific learner outcomes, then how do they plan? Macdonald (1965) claims:
>
> > ... in the final analysis, it could be argued, the teacher in actuality asks a fundamentally different question from 'What am I trying to accomplish?' The teacher asks 'What am I going to do?' and out of the doing comes accomplishment.
>
> This view is supported by Eisner (1985:54), who also argues that teachers are primarily concerned with learning activities. In an attempt to give due emphasis to the role of activities in any planning instruction, Eisner proposes the concept of the 'expressive objective':
>
> > An expressive objective identifies a situation in which [students] are to work, a problem with which they are to cope, a task in which they are to engage; but it does not specify what from that encounter, situation, problem or task they are to learn. An expressive objective provides both the teacher and the student with an invitation to explore, defer or focus on issues that are of peculiar interest or import to the inquirer. An expressive objective is evocative rather than prescriptive.
>
> While behavioural objectives are concerned with **outcomes**, the focus here is clearly on the learning **activities** themselves. Planning in terms of expressive objectives, according to Eisner, frees the teacher from having to work towards rigidly defined specifications of terminal behaviour and allows for unpredictable outcomes of instruction. This difference in focus between a behavioural and an expressive objective is summed up by Popham (1985:60):
>
> > I see a fairly clear difference, using simple terms, between what a teacher, for example, wants to have happen to the kids and what a teacher decides to do in order to have it happen.
>
> It is interesting to note that this attempt by Eisner (over 20 years ago) to move away from the product focus inherent in behavioural objectives and to develop more open-ended methods of planning which focus on learning processes is only just beginning to be reflected in the TESOL literature in the current adoption of the **task** as the basic unit of planning (Candlin and Murphy 1987; Prabhu 1987).
>
> (Brindley, 1989, pp. 7–8)

3.6

Analyse, via your journal, the points raised by Brindley in this discussion of objectives and assessment. Discuss them with at least one study partner, or with work colleagues or the course presenter.

3.7

Reflect on your own practice in the light of this analysis and discussion.

> In what contexts do you provide experiences and activities for your students according to a predetermined plan to achieve specific objectives?
>
> In what situations do you set tasks for students to do in your presence as the basic unit of planning and delivery?

Increasingly, the document used to guide teaching will be a formal curriculum statement prescribed by the accreditation and registration procedures of your institution.

3.8

Look at the documents you use to guide and inform the teaching and learning experiences you provide for your students.

> What is the value of such documents in your work and for your students?
>
> How much freedom do the documents offer you?
>
> How do you respond to them and use them?

Education and Training

It is commonplace, especially among liberal humanists teaching in higher, further, or community education programs, to contrast 'education' and 'training', or even to suggest that they are opposed to each other. This rhetoric, however, is a rather simplistic way of summarising the essential differences between two pedagogies which Onore and Lubetsky (1992) recognise as conflicting but argue, nevertheless, that they should be combined. Their article is included in the Readings (see Reading 3B). It deserves to be considered in detail and in full.

3.9

Read Onore and Lubetsky (1992).

Pay particular attention to their view that 'unifying a humanistic view of the classroom with critical pedagogy is difficult, but essential, we think (p. 254).

Review other concepts of curriculum you have considered, or look up some more.

> How far is it reasonable and/or useful to categorise each of these as 'humanist' or 'critical'?
>
> Is the synthesis Onore and Lubetsky regard as essential achieved in any of the other notions of curriculum and, if so, how?

3.10

Look at the questions Onore and Lubetsky raise about negotiating the curriculum, about 'creating a classroom community.'

Reflect also on their comments about the teacher's role, the locus of control over learning, and the connections between the ALBE context and the community.

> How applicable are these questions and comments to adult education and, in particular, to the teaching of literacy to adults?
>
> Are you led to modify your views in any way about the place of negotiation with students in your own teaching practice?

3.11

Answer the following questions about your role.

> To what extent is it your role to assist students to 'fit into society' and to what extent is it your role to assist students to 'see themselves differently and to think critically and creatively,' as suggested by Onore and Lubetsky?
>
> *This double-barrelled question is posed in a way that suggests it is appropriate to strike a balance between the two positions, or perhaps to adopt one or other of the positions according to different circumstances.*
>
> Do you see your role as a teacher in this way? If so, how do you strike a balance in your approach to meeting student needs, and what kinds of circumstances lead you to adopt one stance rather than the other?
>
> *The questions also refer to only two alternative views of the teacher's role.*

Are there other views of you role that you are aware of? Describe them briefly.

What are the implications of the views you have on these questions for your planning and delivery of learning experiences to students?

Compare your responses to these questions with your reflections on the thinking of Delpit and others in Unit 1 of Module 2, 'Curriculum Areas and Issues', if you have already done that module.

Competency Based Curriculum

The adoption of competency based curriculum as a matter of principle and policy and, increasingly, practice throughout the vocational education and training sector is a vital component of the national training reform agenda. It is becoming more and more expected for adult literacy programs to be

- *based on curriculum which has been documented according to guidelines laid down by the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) through its* ***User's Guide to Course Design for Competency Based Curriculum*** *(1994, 2nd edn), and*
- *accredited by state/territory training recognition units according to nationally consistent criteria, thereby enabling delivery across state/territory borders.*

3.12

Read through the 1994 edition of the *User's Guide to Course Design for Competency-Based Curriculum* (ACTRAC) which should be available in your workplace or institution, or through the course presenter.

Note in your journal the definition of 'competence' and all the other main elements of curriculum on which these guidelines are based.

Test your understanding and acceptance of the key notions by examining some of the learning outcomes you have formulated for recent units of work or lessons against the ACTRAC guidelines and examples.

Re-write the objectives where the need for change or improvement seems to be indicated.

The concept of 'competence' is obviously central, but the concept can mean different things to different people, as the following extracts demonstrate.

Language, literacy and numeracy are central elements of competence for work and social activity. They are best taught, learned and assessed where they occur, through activities in social contexts. That maxim is the foundation of this Framework.

This document deliberately uses the term 'competence' instead of 'competency' which has commonly featured in recent literature on adult education and workplace training. The shared characteristics of some recent reports, scales and frameworks is to define 'competency' without reference to either the significance and impact of specific social contexts or any overarching framework.

Competence requires a connection of performance and knowledge and skills, coordinated in such a way as to achieve social goals in particular contexts.

(*National Framework of AELLN Competence* 1994, p. 5)

Historically, the competency movement has close ties with the more general behaviourist movement which influenced education in the 1960s and 1970s. This influence is still strong in the competency-based analyses of trades and middle level occupations which are characterised by a desire to develop lists of tasks and sub-tasks which can be measured by the used of a checklist.

Whether this approach is valid for the trades is an arguable point but it is clearly not suitable for teaching. It is based on the premise that there is a standard of 'best way' of performing tasks or roles. Teaching, by contrast, is distinguished by its complexity and by legitimate differences of opinion about both its aims and what constitutes appropriate practice.

(Scheeres et al 1993, p. 4)

The National Training Board (NTB) has defined competence as 'the ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standard expected in employment' (NOOSR 1992: 3). It is significant that this definition enables competence to be measured by the observation of work-related performance. This approach to competence draws on behaviourist psychology (Ewell 1985: 3) and is unable to encompass those attributes and potentials which cannot be observed and thereby measured. Norris says:

> Behavioural objectives express what is to be learnt in ways that make it transparent, observable and measurable. Objectives also define the fine grain nature of teaching and learning, usually in a hierarchical form from the simple constituents of the desired behaviour to its more complex expressions. Behavioural objectives are outcome and product oriented. Operational definitions of competence are handled in much the same way. Competence is usually treated as something a person is or should be able to do. It is a description of action, behaviour or outcome in a form that is capable of demonstration, observation and assessment. Associated with a statement of competence is usually a performance criterion and it is this emphasis on 'treating achievements in performance as qualities of persons' which Short and others have criticised as unwarranted (Norris 1991: 332).

(Marginson, 1993, p. 13)

3.13

Consider these extracts in detail.

Compare and contrast them with each other.

Compare them also with:
- the meanings of 'competence', 'objectives' and 'learning outcomes' as set out in the ACTRAC *User's Guide to Course Design*; and
- Brindley's discussion of behavioural objectives and tasks under 3.6 and 3.7.

3.14

Reflect on and discuss with your group or a study partner the different notions or critiques of competency based training to be found in the following extracts:

- 'the significance and impact of specific social contexts'
- the need for and value of 'an overarching framework'
- 'a desire to develop lists of tasks and sub-tasks which can be measured by the used of a checklist'
- 'the premise that there is a standard or 'best way' of performing tasks or roles'
- 'unable to encompass those attributes and potentials which cannot be observed and thereby measured'
- 'a hierarchical form from the simple constituents of the desired behaviour to its more complex expressions'
- 'competence … something a person is or should be able to do'
- 'this emphasis on "treating achievements in performance as qualities of persons".'

Generic or Key Competencies

The Mayer Committee was set up in October 1991 by the Australian Education Council and the Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (AEC/MOVEET).

The committee report, known as the Mayer Report, defined seven 'key competency strands': seven areas of generic competency in education and training which
- *incorporate knowledge as well as skill and*
- *involve not only the ability to perform tasks competently in a given situation, but also the capacity to transfer knowledge and skill to new tasks and new contexts.*

The seven key competencies are:

- Collecting, analysing and organising ideas and information
- Expressing ideas and information [communication]
- Planning and organising activities [includes self-management]
- Working with others and with teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology (including the ability to do so in new situations)

(As cited in Marginson, 1993, Table 1, Appendix 1, p. 146)

The Mayer Committee also devised a system for measuring the achievement of the competencies at three levels of performance by students in the school and TAFE sectors. Simon Marginson's discussion of competency based education and training reform (see Reading 3C) raises questions about the impact of concern with measurement, and also about emphasis on the connection between competence and employment:

> … the desire for measurement drives the definition of competence, rather than the definition of competence defining the appropriate form of measurement. The Mayer Committee is under similar constraints to NOOSR. Rejecting 'narrow behaviourist definitions,' like NOOSR it refuses to separate knowledge from skill, saying that 'competence involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations.' Competencies are not capable of rote learning or trained automatic responses but are 'mindful, thoughtful capabilities,' an approach said to enhance transferability (Mayer 1992: 4-5). However, in the Mayer framework competency still has to be measured and observable behaviours inevitably determine the scope of measurement, whether as ends in themselves or used as surrogates for other attributes.
>
> Like those of the NTB and NOOSR, the Mayer Committee's use of competence is also closely tied to work. The Committee says that its competencies are relevant to 'a wide range of social settings,' but 'the focus on effective preparation for participation in work is, however, critical to the purpose of giving greater emphasis to these competencies and increased value will be realised when the competencies can be developed in contexts in which links to their application in the workplace can be made direct and explicit' (Mayer 1992: 6). This raises the problem of inference or transferability …
>
> The behaviourist aspect of these and related notions of competence has been widely criticised (Kinsman 1992). Empirical observation focuses on performance here and now rather than performance over a lifetime; it fails to distinguish between 'within-college' and after-college' outcomes (Ewell 1985: 3). It is a measure of what is rather than what could be.
>
> (Marginson, 1993, p 14)

3.15

Read Marginson's critique of competency based education and training.

Discuss the critique with your group, a study partner or work colleagues, with particular attention to the following aspects of the argument:

- the 'wholeness of human competence' as against the separation of the individual from the task in the measurement of work-related competencies;
- 'atomisation of work' (p. 14, quoting Professor David Penington);
- the role of intention or purpose;
- the effect of situation or context;
- the difficulty of measuring generic competencies;
- the problem of transferability.

Consider these questions:

> How far do the Mayer key competencies fit with the concepts of 'education for life,' or 'life-long education'?
>
> How relevant to further education and/or community education are Marginson's concerns (although he refers primarily to higher education)?
>
> Can you find instances, from your own experiences with teaching or advising students, that either support or challenge the views Marginson states about the way employers use statements of competence?

The next excerpt comes from a competency based curriculum document,-the Independent Reading module of the ***Introductory Vocational Education Certificate****, DETAFE, South Australia. This recently accredited course fits category 3.1 on the Interim Literacy Course Matrix (ILCM). It was designed according to the principles in the* ***National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence****, and written according to the* ***User's Guide to Course Design for Competency Based Curriculum.***

3.16

Examine the excerpt, showing a typical learning outcome statement:

> **Learning outcome 3:**
> Unlock meaning from familiar types of texts found in everyday situations
>
> **Assessment criteria:**
> 3.1 Identify the main idea and key points in a text of approx. 500 words in length
> 3.2 Identify the context and explain any significant background information

3.3 Respond to what the writer has said and discuss whether the writer has influenced the reader's view
3.4 Recognise signpost words in text e.g. hence, because, the first, ...
3.5 Work out the meaning of unfamiliar key words using the context, base words or a dictionary

Conditions:
Written or oral demonstration, unsupervised,
e.g. summarise text (oral or written), take notes from a text.

Consider the following questions in reference to the excerpt.

What knowledge and skills are measured by the tasks given to students.

What are the competencies related to this learning outcome and the assessment criteria? Are they work-related, or key competencies, or both?

How are the assessment criteria related to the learning outcome?

3.17

Expand your analysis into an examination of a complete CBT curriculum document for the course you are currently teaching, or for another course. Consider the competency standards (or statements) and the specific learning outcomes, the assessment criteria, assessment tasks and conditions.

3.18

Draw conclusions from your reflections and examinations about:

- the advantages and disadvantages of the CBT approach to curriculum;
- the need to work with a documented curriculum and the value of doing so.

Unit 2
Evaluation

Section A
Objectives and issues in program evaluation

Heather Haughton wrote in the editorial of ***Good Practice in Australian Adult Literacy and Basic Education,*** *No. 17, p. 1:*

> We need to keep asking why we do what we do, and for whose benefit.

Unit 2 takes Heather Haughton's simply stated, yet fundamental, and also much neglected proposition as one of its guiding lights.

Evaluation of curriculum is the unit's main focus. Approaching curriculum evaluation through the perspectives provided by the theory and practice of program evaluation ensures that attention is paid to socio-political, economic, managerial and other context-related issues which affect evaluation in practice.

Emphasis on the importance of evaluation in good teaching and learning practice is increasing. Evaluation is singled out in ***The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting best practice*** *(University of Technology, Sydney, 1993) as one of the specific competencies which practitioners should possess. This unit of the course reinforces that emphasis, and explores approaches to evaluation in adult literacy programs, and issues which arise.*

Learning activities

Definitions of Evaluation

3.19

Read the following statements about 'evaluation'.

> In the broadest sense, evaluations are concerned with whether or not programs or policies are achieving their goals and purposes. Discerning the goals of policies and programs is an essential part of an evaluation and almost always its starting point.

> However, goals and purposes are often stated vaguely, typically in an attempt to garner as much political support as possible. Programs and policies that do not have clear and consistent goals cannot be evaluated for their effectiveness. In response, a sub speciality of evaluation research, evaluability, has developed to uncover the goals and purposes of policies and programs in order to judge whether or not they can be evaluated.
>
> (Berk & Rossi 1990, p. 15)

> Ideally, the enterprise [curriculum] is directed towards promoting valued knowledge, abilities and attitudes in the learner, where 'valued' encompasses the world view of both teacher and learner. Curriculum, in the sense in which I use it, can therefore be described and fully comprehended only in retrospect. The quality and scope of what children, both foreseen and unforeseen, are the proper focus of evaluation.
>
> (Boomer 1992, p. 33)

> Evaluation is the act of examining and judging, concerning the worth, quality, significance, amount, degree, or condition of something. In short, evaluation is the ascertainment of merit.
>
> (Brookfield 1986 [citing Stufflebeam 1986], p. 264)

> collection and analysis of information in order to facilitate informed decision making.
>
> (Lambert & Owen, 1993, p. 1).

> Evaluation is concerned with making value judgements about all sorts of things in our lives. In education it usually refers to making judgements about student performance and behaviours and the use of that information to enhance both learning/teaching and the curriculum.
>
> (Print 1988, p. 157)

> The word 'evaluate' contains the word 'value.' Evaluate means placing some standard or judgement of worth on a piece of information gathered. Thus, we are continually evaluating in every phase of the curriculum process.
>
> (Smith & Lovat 1991, p. 145)

3.20

Note your observations in your journal in response to the questions below.

> What do these statements have in common? Where do they differ?
>
> Which of the definitions seems closest to your own understanding of what you do as a practitioner when you 'evaluate' the program you carry out with your students?

Reflect briefly on your current practices and decide
- if you could add any new activities or change any emphases, or
- if there are elements in what you do that the definitions do not cover adequately.

Discuss your views and findings with your group or with a study partner or the course presenter.

Measurement, Assessment and Evaluation

Keep in mind the definitions cited in the previous learning activity and the work you have already completed in this course. Now consider Chapter 10, 'Measurement, Assessment and Evaluation,' from Smith and Lovat (1991), included in the Readings (see Reading 3D).

3.21

Distinguish as clearly as you can between the processes of measurement, assessment and evaluation, in terms of both theory and practice, without necessarily separating them.

> Which elements or phrases in the definitions of 'evaluation' are you able to link to what you understand by 'measurement', 'assessment' and 'evaluation'?

Draw diagrams or flow charts in your journal to illustrate various possible relationships between the three processes.

Types of Evaluation and their Purposes

The Smith and Lovat extract describes commonly applied types (or aspects) of evaluation and seem to use 'assessment' interchangeably with 'evaluation'. This approach should be compared to descriptions by theorists who keep the terms separate.

Here are the Smith and Lovat terms:
- *norm-referenced assessment*
- *criterion-referenced assessment*
- *formative evaluation*
- *summative evaluation*
- *goal-based assessment*

Print (1988) identifies a rather different set of evaluation types and purposes.

> **Product evaluation** - 'an evaluation of student performance in a specific learning context'
> **Process evaluation** - which 'examines the experiences and activities involved in the learning situation,' and includes two sub-categories:
> 1. **Curriculum evaluation** - 'applies the processes of evaluation to the context of the curriculum', and
> 2. **Teacher evaluation** - 'concerned with an examination of the teacher's performance with a view to providing useful feedback.'
>
> (Print 1988, pp. 142)

3.22

Contract with your group to undertake some wider reading in order to clarify the meaning of 'evaluation' and to share examples of the various types or aspects of evaluation.

Make notes in your journal about the purposes each of these forms of evaluation might serve in relation to adult literacy and basic education teaching and learning, following a discussion in which all members of the group will have contributed the outcomes of their own investigations.

3.23

Find out as much as you can about the process known as 'bench marking,' which is concerned very largely with quantitative measurements related to questions of accountability, productivity and cost-effectiveness.

Possible sources for this information include consultation with the representative of your institution on a state/territory program or work group for vocational education and training, reference to WELL or SIP Guidelines, current policy and procedure on tendering, statistical and other components of the State/Territory Training Profile, and/or the periodical ***Benchmark****.*

The Content Of Evaluation

Chapter 2 of Lambert and Owen (1993) gives five basic types of evaluation, according to the different purposes they serve:

1. *evaluation for program* ***development***
2. *evaluation for program* ***clarification***
3. *evaluation for program* ***improvement***

4 *evaluation for program* ***monitoring***
5 *evaluation for program* ***justification***

In Figure 2.1 there is a comparative description of the main operating components of each type. It is important to note here that 'program' is defined in 'the generic sense to encompass planning, policies and programs.' Hence 'program evaluation' could be replaced by 'planning evaluation' or 'policy evaluation.'

A Guide to Program Evaluation *(Lambert & Owen) is available as an integral part of the NSDC program,* ***Professional Development for Program Evaluation: Evaluation for ALBE Programs*** *(1995).*

3.24

Clarify the differences between the five basic types of evaluation, their focus and content, based on the evaluation scenarios on page 5 of Lambert and Owen.

Note your ideas about the scenarios in your journal and discuss them with your group, or with a study partner or the course presenter.

Developing a Culture of Evaluation

It is often observed that evaluation, while being acknowledged as a vital component of the process of curriculum or program development, is frequently hampered in the adult literacy and basic education field (as in all other sectors of education). Some possible reasons for this are listed by Lambert and Owen.

- a tendency to see evaluation as 'student assessment'
- a belief that evaluation is time-consuming, complex and difficult and something different from the evaluative tasks already built into existing practices
- a high value on individualism among providers
- a lack of useful/timely feedback from the range of program data collected
- a lack of policy, planning, infrastructure and resourcing support
- fear of the effects of evaluation on future funding.

(Lambert & Owen, p. 1)

3.25

Answer the following questions after reflecting on your own experience.

Could you add to Lambert and Owen's list?

Which three factors do you regard as the most influential in hampering the development of an evaluation culture within the ALBE field?

Recommend what actions could be taken to address the inherent problems.

Discuss your views with your study group, if possible, or with a study partner, work colleagues or the course presenter.

Program Evaluation: The Bigger Picture

3.26

Read the following abstracts of useful articles from *Good Practice.*

1 Evans (1990) 'Working towards user-friendly evaluation', *Good Practice,* No. 7, pp. 10–11

This piece highlights, particularly in its diagram, the very different evaluative emphases and preoccupations evident along the spectrum from the students to the funding authority.

2 Simmons (1992) 'The missing Cs', *Good Practice,* No. 17, pp. 8–9 and McHugh (1994) 'Exposing stereotypes about clients' *Good Practice,* No. 23, pp. 12–14, an account of a CES Literacy Awareness Workshop

These brief articles offer valuable insights into the less obvious ways in which external agents affect program delivery. They remind us of the importance of countering potential negative influence.

Obtain copies of *Good Practice,* Nos 7, 17 and 23 and read the articles in full.

3.27

Study also two charts from Lambert and Owen (p. 22 & p.42):

Figure 3.1: 'Evaluation for Program Development: Questions to Ask'
Figure 5.1: 'Program Improvement: Questions to Ask'

These charts show essential features of all types of evaluation:

- four levels of operation (provider, regional, state/territory, or national)
- with a focus of evaluation and key audiences being identified at each level.

3.28

Discuss these readings and charts so as to develop your understanding of the issues and to help you clarify your answers to the questions which follow.

> What fills the policy space—the context—that includes you and the course you deliver and the students you teach?
>
> What influence do the special interests of stakeholders exert on your program—especially any powerful external agencies?
>
> Is there a need for a philosophy of ALBE practice and a rationale for the evaluation of ALBE practice?
>
> What is the importance of establishing and implementing a culture of evaluation and systematic monitoring practices at the provider level and especially at the teacher/student level?

Refer to the NSDC program, *Professional Development for Program Evaluation: Evaluation for ALBE Programs* (1995) which contains a copy of Lambert and Owen, *A Guide to Program Evaluation*, to assist you with this activity.

It will be salutary at this point to take heed of the warning in Brookfield (1986) about the dangers of pursuing procedure and technique in adult literacy and basic education in the absence of a clear rationale for practices in curriculum design, delivery and evaluation.

> We are philosophically numb, concerned with the design of ever more sophisticated needs assessment techniques, program planning models, and evaluative procedures. It seems not to have occurred to us that the perfection of technique can only be meaningful when placed within a context of some fundamental human or social purpose.
>
> (Brookfield, 1986, p. 289)

Read the full extract which is available as Reading 3E.

Accountability

In the current political, economic and industrial climate, productivity is paramount. As a result, evaluation of curriculum - or, more generally, of programs - is much preoccupied with such matters as cost-effectiveness, efficiency, accountability for expenditure, advancing the training reform agenda, or serving the wider national interest. Notice, for example, how soon interest in knowing about the individual student's progress drops away in Daryl Evans's diagram of the evaluation system in 'Working towards user-friendly evaluation' (1990).

One very important manifestation of the accountability of programs to external funding authorities for the productivity of their outcomes is provided by the guidelines for tenders.

3.29

Read the section on 'Monitoring and Evaluation' in the current *WELL Guidelines* (which should be available in your workplace or institution, or through the course presenter).

Note in your journal both the explicit and the implicit criteria by which funded programs will be regarded as successful.

3.30

Analyse closely Figures 6.11, 6.16, 6.21, and 6.26 Chapter 6 of Lambert and Owen.

> They provide more detailed evidence of the emphasis on accountability at all operational levels.

Comment on the following issues in your journal, and discuss them with a study partner or work colleagues:

> how the concerns of the stakeholders can be seen in the formulation of objectives related to curriculum;
>
> detailing criteria for measuring whether the objectives are being met;
>
> the impact that such concerns exert, directly or indirectly, on the design and delivery of courses at the level of practitioners and students;
>
> means by which evaluation of curriculum at that level could reduce adverse effects of the evaluation process itself.

Meryl Thompson's address on 'Evaluation and Accountability,' included as Reading 3F, outlines the findings of recent research on the perceptions held by various stakeholders in workplace education programs about the purposes and outcomes of those programs. In some ways the findings seem encouraging, but when analysed more closely they show the dominance of the deficit model in thinking about the skills and needs of workers. A more comprehensive approach to evaluation is therefore advocated—one which is less readily confused with assessment of students' learning and which values other knowledge and skills that many stakeholders in adult literacy and basic education aim to develop and display.

The same concerns about the impact of external stakeholders were voiced by Simmons and McHugh in 3.26. By alerting us to developments such as case management and closer links between, for example, CES officers and ALBE providers, these readings encourage us to reflect on what accountability means. Teachers can certainly face conflict as they try to address the personal needs of their students—their need to be employable and employed—and also to keep in mind the bigger picture.

3.31

Answer the following questions.

> How is accountability to be understood and applied in adult literacy and basic education programs?
>
> What does this mean for defining and measuring outcomes of programs?

Evaluation and Empowerment of Students

> Developing in adults a sense of their personal power and self-worth is seen as a fundamental purpose of all education and training efforts. Only if such a sense of individual empowerment is realised will adults possess the emotional strength to challenge behaviours, values, and beliefs accepted uncritically by a majority. Both causally antecedent to, and concurrent with, this developing sense of self-worth in the individual comes an awareness of the contextuality of knowledge and beliefs. The task of the educator, then, becomes that of encouraging adults to perceive the relative, contextual nature of previously unquestioned givens. Additionally, the educator should assist the adult to reflect on the manner in which values, beliefs, and behaviours previously deemed unchallengeable can be critically analysed. Through presenting alternative ways of interpreting and creating the world to adults, the educator fosters a willingness to consider alternative ways of living.
>
> These criteria are offered for consideration by educators as fundamental indicators by which they may judge the worth of a formal or informal effort to facilitate learning.
>
> (Brookfield, 1986, pp. 283–84)

3.32

Note your understanding of Brookfield's assertions and how you respond to them in your journal.

List the specific criteria you can elicit from Brookfield's statement for judging the worth of a unit of work in adult literacy and basic education.

Compare the list of criteria with:

- **a** evaluation criteria (explicit or implicit) in a formal curriculum document with which you are currently working; and
- **b** criteria you used (formally or informally) to judge the effectiveness of the last few teaching sessions you took.

Reflect on the changes which could be made in both cases to enhance the learning achieved by students in terms of two objectives: achieving understanding of their context and gaining increased empowerment within it.

Discuss your notes and findings with a study partner, work colleagues or the course presenter.

Student Perspectives on Evaluation

3.33

Elicit by confidential questionnaire, free brainstorming, journal entries or other means, the views held by members of one or more of your current student groups about the value individual students place on the learning they are undertaking.

Why do they enrol in ALBE programs?

What do they hope to achieve
- for themselves and
- for 'significant others' in their lives?

What further learning ambitions do they have, and how will completion of their current course advance these?

What did they have to give up in order to take this course?

What difficulties are they encountering
- financial, personal, material (e.g. access to equipment or resources)
- supportive (e.g. availability of staff outside class hours)?

3.34

Initiate discussion of your students' responses in one or more subsequent sessions.

Record all the responses volunteered on a whiteboard.

Invite students to group them according to categories such as the following.

- Factors out of the control of:
  the students
  the staff
  the management (of the institution)
  funding agencies and
  government policy (Commonwealth or State/Territory).
- Factors within control of the same groups.
- Factors which are felt to be 'objective' and which can be measured quantitatively.
- Factors which are 'subjective' and which need to be measured qualitatively.
- Factors which would show up as a result of monitoring and assessing the learning, for example competencies achieved by students.

Some prompting or other direction from you will probably be required.

3.35

Give students time, perhaps in small groups, to consider the implications of the findings after completing the exercise in 3.34.

Ask their opinions about the role of students as stakeholders in the continual monitoring and evaluation of curriculum, and of programs.

Discuss with them ways and means by which student opinion could be drawn into the processes of curriculum and program planning, evaluation, and continual improvement.

Unit 2
Evaluation

Section B
Methods for evaluating curriculum

Learning activities

Basic Strategies and Approaches

3.36

Read the following brief outline of ten different models of program evaluation from Caulley (1989).

1. MEASUREMENT MODEL

Measurement is defined as the assignment of numbers to objects and events according to rules. Measurement and evaluation are often confused with one another, but as you can see by the two definitions, measurement has no component of valuing since a number has no value in and of itself.

Numerical indicators (called performance indicators in model 3) are used to demonstrate quality e.g. the number of users, numbers indicating success, test scores, etc. The measurement model is historically the first, since the Chinese invented tests, their first recorded use being about the year 2200 BC.

There are three basic ways in which value judgements are made in relation to numerical information on valuands. The term 'evaluand' will be used to refer to that which is being evaluated.

(1) Comparison of evaluands with one another.
e.g. How is your program performing compared to other programs?
Comparison is often made between an evaluand with what is the norm, average or typical for comparable evaluands.
e.g. Is your program abnormal in some way?
You may have heard of the term norm-referenced testing.

(2) Comparison of an evaluand with some standard or criterion.
e.g. Does your program meet certain standards or criteria?
You may have heard the term criterion-referenced testing.

(3) Comparison of an evaluand with itself.
e.g. Has your program improved or gone backwards?
The emphasis is on change. I have coined the term 'growth-referenced testing,' since a basic aim of education is the promotion of student growth.

2. BLUE-RIBBON PANEL MODEL

There are many variants of this model which include Royal Commissions, Committees of Inquiry, and Review Panels. This model is a favourite of governments and politicians.
It is often precipitated by some public or media outcry, and its purpose is usually reform. The setting up of a blue-ribbon panel is often a move to demonstrate that they, the politicians, are taking action on a problem, but in reality it is often a way of postponing or not taking action.

The prime consideration in choosing members for a blue-ribbon panel is their public credibility, since the public is usually the audience for the inquiry and consequently the values responded to are general societal values. The model probably originated in Great Britain during the nineteenth century when there were continuing attempts to reform education, the poor laws, hospitals, orphanages, and public health.

3. MANAGEMENT MODEL

The key criteria are how effective and efficient is the evaluand? During the early part of the twentieth century the idea of scientific management became a powerful force in administrative theory in educational and industrial circles. The model has re-emerged in recent years as part of the corporate management style. It is an accountability model, concerned with the efficient use of resources and favoured in times of diminishing monetary resources. It is a 'black box' model with an emphasis on inputs and outputs. Effectiveness is shown by measurable (versus non-measurable) performance indicators. Performance indicators are a useful tool of evaluator-accountants when dealing with declining budgetary resources. Those evaluands which perform will be given funds, but funds will not be given to those which do not perform.

4. OBJECTIVES MODEL

The key criterion of this popular model is to what extent has an evaluand achieved its objectives? Value judgements are made on the basis of the extent to which there is congruence between performance of the evaluand and the objectives. The choice of objectives represents somebody's values. Performance is commonly taken to be measurable performance. The objectives model was initiated by Ralph Tyler around 1929 at Ohio State University. The key notion of objectives eventually led to the notion of management by objectives.

The middle sixties saw the proliferation of a whole host of new models of evaluation. The stimulus was the concern of the effects of the billions of dollars spent on health, education, and social programs in the US. under President Johnson's notion of the Great Society. In 1964, for the first time, the law makers required that part of the funds given for programs be used to evaluate whether the programs were having an effect.

5. DECISION-MAKING MODEL

Under this model, evaluation is defined as a process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives. As the definition stands, it is an information gathering model rather than a model for making value judgements. However, a decision-maker will prefer or value certain information in making a decision, as well as using values in deciding between alternatives. The model is a relative of the management model and its originator was Daniel Stufflebeam.

6. EXPERIMENTAL MODEL

This model is named for the fact that the model makes use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs first proposed by Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley in 1963. The key criterion is whether the program is having an effect which is causally related to the program. The reason for choosing experimental designs is that they can prove that a program is causing an effect. The experimental model is the only model that can potentially offer such proof of causality and is favoured for this reason.

7. NEEDS MODEL

The key criterion of this model is whether the program is satisfying clients' needs. While needs are distinguished from wants in the model, the decision on what are the needs of clients is a value-laden and context-bound decision. The model, first proposed by the Australian Michael Scriven, is based on notions of consumerism.

8. EXPERT MODEL

In the expert model, an acknowledged expert in the area of a program is brought in to make judgements and criticisms of the program. Such experts have also been called consultants, inspectors, critics, and connoisseurs. In this model it is the expert's values that are predominant. A major proponent of this model is Elliot Eisner, a professor of art education at Stanford University, who called it the connoisseurship model. This model and the following models are seen as qualitative models, whereas the previous models in this summary are seen as quantitative in nature.

9. DEMOCRATIC MODEL

Proponents of this model see the previous models as being authoritarian or bureaucratic in nature and as assuming that there is value consensus. The democratic model exists in various versions: responsive evaluation (Robert Stake), illuminative evaluation (Malcolm Parlett and David Hamilton) and advocate-adversary evaluation (Robert Wolf). Two key notions are those of power sharing and value pluralism. The evaluator questions and responds to those people who have a strong inherent stake in the program

> (called stakeholders e.g. program staff, program participants, funders, etc.) The evaluator will take pains to discover what claims they make about the program, what are their concerns, and what is at issue. Differing stakeholders' claims and concerns will reveal their value pluralism. Democratic evaluation recognises that different people will give differing evaluations to a program according to their differing values and, by responding to their values, the evaluator will make the evaluation more meaningful, useful and illuminative.
>
> 10. SELF-EVALUATION MODEL
>
> Self-evaluation is a relative of the previous model, and it is the nearest to an Australian model ... A strong proponent has been Stephen Kemmis of Deakin University. Self-evaluation may be carried out by a unit such as a single person, a group of people, an institution, or an organisation. A key notion is that of reflection on the unit's goals, problems, needs and values rather than those of somebody or something outside the unit. The purpose is generally for change, reform or improvement of the unit and it is said these are more likely to be initiated under self-evaluation. Maybe this model should be placed earlier on the list historically, since self-evaluation and reflection is a key technique of many counsellors, psychotherapists and psychiatrists.
>
> (Caulley, 1989, pp. 15–17)

3.37

Decide which two or three of the major approaches to program evaluation above are most likely to be useful as a foundation for evaluation of the effectiveness of curriculum in your own teaching/learning situation.

In making your decision about the most appropriate approaches, focus your attention on the assessment task for the Program Development module: the design, delivery and evaluation of a substantial unit of teaching/learning in your own learning environment. The methods for evaluating curriculum which you investigate in this present section of the module should assist you to choose the most suitable method for judging the effectiveness of the unit you are now planning.

3.38

Follow up relevant references from the module's reading lists, and/or by a library search to find out more about the approaches you favour.

Summarise the main features of the approaches in your journal, including illustrative practical examples.

3.39

Read, reflect on and discuss Chapter 5, 'Evaluation for Program Improvement', in Lambert and Owen (1993).

Process evaluation, or evaluation for curriculum improvement, or for program improvement on a larger scale, is the form of evaluation which the majority of practitioners in the adult literacy and basic education field will use or experience most frequently.

The extract introduces (p. 37) the important concepts of 'responsive evaluation,' 'naturalistic inquiry', and 'action research.' These essentially pragmatic and highly consultative and open-ended approaches to evaluation are probably the most user-friendly and productive strategies available at your level of operation in the field.

Lambert and Owen go on (p. 38) to cite Wadsworth's notion of 'the need to develop a 'culture of evaluation' whereby evaluation becomes a way of thinking which permeates every kind and level of daily action,' and to list the opportunities Wadsworth suggested for establishing a 'comprehensive program of in-built evaluation.

3.40

Reflect on the evaluation practices followed in your own organisation in the light of this discussion.

Draft a brief outline in your journal of some systematic and workable ways of continually reviewing the effectiveness of your work, using the strategies you have been discussing as a basis.

Planning for Evaluation

In a concise way the extract from Berk & Rossi (1990), Reading 3G, introduces and explains important technical concepts which you will need to address in planning and executing an evaluation of your own curriculum planning and teaching/learning activities with students.

3.41

Express in your journal your personal understanding of the following terms, developed through discussion of the extract and wider reading and thinking about your own practice:

- 'effectiveness': marginal, relative, cost
- 'validity': construct, internal, external, statistical conclusion and
- measurement: systematic, random.

Note:
It is not necessary to achieve precise definitions of the terms in an academic sense. Aim rather at gaining a practical, operational understanding of the concerns and processes bound up with the concepts, and then applying this understanding to your own preparations for making an evaluation of a teaching/learning unit.

One important way of keeping this activity within the bounds of usefulness in relation to your own working environment is to think of specific actions you and/or your students might undertake in order to address the concerns and implement the processes. Not necessarily all the elements of evaluation research or design as described by Berk and Rossi will find their way into the particular piece of evaluation you are considering.

3.42

Read Chapter 2 of Lambert and Owen (1993) with a critical eye, recalling Brookfield's warning about the need for an underpinning and informing philosophical rationale in mind, and above all thinking of your own specific evaluative plans and your need for practical guidance.

Review the notes of your discussion with your students about evaluation, when the group categorised several factors affecting students' learning which might need to be measured in some way as part of the evaluation you are planning.

Use Figure 2.5, 'An Evaluation Planner' from Lambert & Owen (1993) as a guide for evaluation of the unit of teaching/learning you design and deliver in Unit 3 of this module.

3.43

Discuss your ideas about evaluation, and the use you might make of the planning pro formas and other approaches and mechanisms identified in this section of the course, with your group, a study partner, work colleagues, or the course presenter.

3.44

Map out the particular steps you propose to take in evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching/learning unit you are planning, and the sequence in which you will implement each step in your journal.

Note the procedures you will use to ensure the validity of the measurements you intend to take, and other monitoring and reporting processes you will be using.

Think about a number of practical issues for the design and implementation of your evaluation.

> How will you make sure that your evaluation enables you to draw reliable conclusions about the success with which the unit enabled students to achieve all the learning outcomes?
>
> Which particular factors potentially contributing to the effectiveness of the unit do you want to measure and judge - structure and organisation of the unit, scheduling of sessions, teaching style and methods, use of technology, etc - and how will you deal with each one?
>
> What weight will you attach to the assessment of students' acquiring of specific knowledge and skills? How much assessment is appropriate as against other learning experiences for the students? Have you established a valid connection between the student learning you wish to monitor and assess - for reporting, certification, or other purposes - and the conclusions you wish to be able to infer about the value of the learning experiences to the students, or the clarity with which you have defined the competencies and learning outcomes for the unit?
>
> What scope is there for evaluating the unit in qualitative terms, and what mechanisms will you use? How will you deal with the question of validity in relation to qualitative measures and judgments?

3.45

Defend your outline of an evaluation scheme before your fellow participants and/or your presenter in a face to face group or via a teleconference or videoconference.

> Alternatively, if it is too difficult to arrange a discussion, or if you miss the group session for some reason, present the relevant entries in your journal to a work colleague, or the course presenter for supportive, confidential feedback.

Maintain full notes in your journal of the concerns you are dealing with, the ideas for evaluation that you are researching and the feedback you obtain from colleagues.

> All this information will be valuable to you when you come to report on the links between your own learning and the curriculum and evaluation activities that you undertake with your students in the Practical Project.

Unit 3
Practical project

This unit concludes the Program Development module and brings ***Adult Literacy Teaching: A flexible delivery program*** *to culmination.*

Unlike other units in the course, participants will address the assessment criteria not by working through the various sections as they have been doing, but by completing their Practical Project, a single major task. Achievement of the learning outcomes will be assessed from the participants' knowledge and skills demonstrated by doing the following:

- *carrying out the Practical Project: developing, presenting and evaluating a substantial teaching/learning unit with their own students; and*
- *presenting their report of the Practical Project.*

It is a complex exercise to design and deliver a teaching/learning unit, to monitor students' achievements and evaluate the effectiveness of the unit. Participants will need to review their experience in the whole course, draw upon new or extended insights and skills they have acquired, and put all of this into practice in their own adult literacy and basic education environment.

In the report, which is to be a focused piece of academic writing, participants will show how ***Adult Literacy Teaching*** *has informed their professional practice; and in particular how they have increased their understanding of*

- *adult learning*
- *approaches to teaching literacy and*
- *the theory and practice of assessment, curriculum and evaluation.*

Learning activities

Details of the assessment requirements of the unit, and the various options available for meeting them, are set out at the beginning of the description of Module 3, 'Program Development'.

At an early stage in Module 3, the course presenter will have provided you with a set of guidelines for the Practical Project and presentation of the formal report.

By now you should have clarified the assessment methods for the module and the course, and have negotiated with the course presenter all details, for example how you will satisfy the assessment criteria and within what time frame.

3.46

Review all the work you have completed for the course in preparation for the final assignment, especially the work on assessment, curriculum and evaluation.

3.47

Design the curriculum you will use.

The following questions may help you to develop details of your curriculum.

Who is taught?
What priorities or target groups are involved?
How are students selected?
By what methods are students placed in programs?
What are the intentions or goals of the curriculum?
What are the students expected to learn. What do they want to learn?
How do the students want to achieve their learning outcomes?
How will you and the students know the outcomes have been achieved?
What curriculum frameworks are you required to observe, if any?
What policy framework is shaping the curriculum?
What learning resources and facilities are available for teaching?
Which teachers are available to teach, or assist with teaching, the unit?
What training and support have teachers had?
What impact does the source of funding have on the curriculum?
What are the accountability requirements for reporting on the outcomes?

3.48

Design and deliver a teaching/learning unit extending over an agreed length of time.

3.49

Monitor the learning of your students during the unit to assess their achievement of the learning outcomes—partially or fully, to negotiate with the students the appropriate evaluation criteria and procedures and to evaluate the effectiveness of the unit.

3.50

Prepare and present, within an agreed time frame, your report of the Practical Project as a focused piece of academic writing, supplemented by other materials as negotiated with the presenter.

Adult
LITERACY
Teaching

A flexible delivery program

Readings

Contents

Readings for Module 1

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1A MacKeracher D. (1993) 'Women as learners', in T. Barer-Stein & J. Draper (eds), *The Craft of Teaching Adults*, Culture Concepts, Toronto, Canada, pp. 71–86. 213

1B Sexton M. (1980) 'Theories of adult learning', *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 3–14. 231

1C Hill S. (1990) *Just Literacy! Break the Barriers: case studies of adults learning to read and write.* SA Committee for International Literacy Year, Adelaide. 245

1D Murphy A. (1987) 'Is student-centred learning a form of tokenism?', *Viewpoints*, No. 7, pp. 23–25. 255

Readings for Module 2

2A Gee J. (1990) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in discourses.* The Falmer Press, Hampshire, pp. 137–163. 261

2B Harris S. (1990) 'Walking through cultural doors: Aborigines, communication and cultural continuity', in C. Hedrick & R. Holton (eds), *Cross-cultural Communication and Professional Education.*, Centre for Multicultural Studies, Flinders University of SA, pp. 127–138. 289

2C Hope D. (1994) 'The literacy war', *The Weekend Australian*, July 16. 303

2D Cope B. & Kalantzis M. (eds) (1993) *The Powers of Literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing.* The Falmer Press, London, pp. 1–21. 309

2E Luke A. (1992) 'When basic skills and information processing just aren't enough: rethinking reading in new times.' *ACAL Conference Papers* Vol. 1, pp. 1–24. 331

2F Brindley G. (1989) *Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum.* National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, NSW, pp. 3–18. 357

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3A Shore S., Black A., Simpson A. & Coombe M. (1993) *Positively Different: Guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language and numeracy curricula.* Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra, pp. 5–31. 367

3B Onore C. & Lubetsky B. (1992) 'Why we learn is what and how we learn: curriculum as possibility,' in G. Boomer, N. Lester, C. Onore & J. Cook (eds) *Negotiating the Curriculum.* The Falmer Press, London, pp. 253–265. 395

3C Marginson S. (1993) *Arts, Science and Work: Evaluations and investigations program,* DEET. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, pp. 13–43. 409

3D Smith D. & Lovat T. (1991) *Curriculum: Action on reflection.* rev. edn, Social Science Press, Wentworth Falls, NSW, pp. 133–152. 441

3E Brookfield S. (1986) *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A comprehensive analysis of principles and effective practices.* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 283–297. 453

3F Thompson M. (1991) *Competency Based Training: Some developmental and assessment issues for policy makers.* Department of Technical and Further Education, Adelaide, pp. 33–35. 463

3G Berk R. & Rossi P. (1990) *Thinking about Program Evaluation.* Sage Publications, California, pp. 12–32. 467

Please refer to the original titles if the full details of the authors' references are not supplied in the extracts.

Reading 1A

MacKeracher D. (1993) 'Women as learners', in T. Barer-Stein & J. Draper (eds) *The Craft of Teaching Adults*, Culture Concepts, Toronto, Canada, pp. 71–86.

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Chapter 4
Women as Learners
Dorothy MacKeracher

What Makes Women Feel Left Out?

This chapter is about women as learners and about how we, as adult educators, can make the educational programs and activities we plan and implement more responsive to women's styles of learning.

In the field of adult education, most educators believe in humanistic values in dealing with all learners. They plan programs which strive to maintain equity among learners, introduce content which is relevant to the needs of the learners, provide opportunities for learners to be self-directing, create an environment which supports and values individual learners, and implement activities which encourage the development of learning-to-learn skills.

Women have become aware that such planning and facilitating approaches are sometimes not enough. For example, we know that:

> *small group discussions do not confer equity on all members of a learning group; a supportive environment does not lead all learners to feel empowered enough to share what they know; the relative independence of self-directed learning is not appropriate for all learners; and learning-to-learn skills may help in learning through thinking but not necessarily in learning through doing.*

What is it about women's learning which makes them feel left out of many educational endeavours? Such knowledge might help us understand other groups in our society, such as the poor and minority racial or linguistic groups that have been left behind by the educational system.

In this chapter, I'll begin by considering how and why women's experiences must be reclaimed in order to expand our understanding of human behaviour in general. Then I'll review some of the ideas which have emerged recently from feminist research and commentary about women as learners. At the end I'll return to the issue of how we, as adult educators, can use these ideas to expand our understanding of human learning and to improve our approaches to facilitating the learning of both men and women.

Reclaiming Women's Voices: The Justice Model and the Care Model of Moral Reasoning.

> *Much of the literature on adult learning and development is written by men about male behaviours which are described as "normal" for all humans both men and women.*

To help us understand how the female voice has been left out of our traditional understanding of adult learning and development, we'll look at the work of Carol Gilligan (1982) who draws our attention to the development of moral reasoning and how this may help us to understand adult learning and development. Traditional opinion about morality tells us that, in order to become morally mature, we should develop and use ideas which focus on justice, equality among persons, the value of fair rules, and setting, maintaining and abiding by moral contracts between persons and social groups.

However, we find that the research upon which this *justice model* was based either did not include any females as participants, or the caring responses that were gathered from girls and women did not fit into the justice model and were ignored. Yet written reports about the justice model explicitly state that it describes the full range of moral behaviour and is equally true for girls and boys, women and men.

Gilligan (1982) proposes a second, equally valid approach to moral reasoning, described as a *care model*, which focuses on concerns for being connected to others and the value of responsiveness to the needs of others. These two models of moral reasoning focus on different moral concerns, moral problems and moral ideas as outlined in Table 1.

Gilligan (1990) reports that while most of the men and women in her studies were able to utilize both models of moral reasoning, two-thirds of them focused on one model, elaborating one set of concerns and minimally representing the other. She also reports that the tendency to focus on one model was equally characteristic of both men and women but the care focus was almost exclusively a female phenomenon. Further, if girls and women had been eliminated from her studies, the care focus in moral reasoning would virtually disappear.

The justice model of moral reasoning is not the only theory which describes human behaviour on the basis of male examples. Such an approach is also found in Piaget's model of cognitive development, Freud's model of sexual development, and Erikson's model of psychosocial development. Since such theorists have dominated our thinking about human behaviour, women have consistently been excluded from the development of the knowledge base which guides our behaviour in everyday life. When women have been included it has been because of unusual abilities or circumstances and not because they are representatives of their gender. In the social sciences, therefore, the experiences and opinions of

Table 1

Comparison of Justice & Care Models of Moral Reasoning

(Based on ideas described in Gilligan, 1982,1990)

	Justice Model	Care Model
Focus of concern	Equality among persons Fair rules Moral contracts Reciprocity Rights of individuals & society	Being connected to others Being responsive to the needs of others Understanding others Needs of individuals & society
Moral problems defined in terms of	Oppression Inequity Exploitation	Detachment Abandonment Neglect
Moral ideals defined in terms of	Respect Equality Honour	Attention Regard Care

women rarely are included in our understanding of human behaviour. Gilligan's work helped women to understand how they had been left out of one theoretical explanation of human behaviour and challenged all of us to examine other models more carefully.

Questions which remain to be answered include: How are other descriptions of human behaviour inaccurate with regard to girls and women? What must we understand about the behaviour of girls and women to develop a more integrated view of human behaviour? How is the well-being of girls and women affected when they are left out of descriptions and explanations of human behaviour? In this chapter we will address these questions in terms of adult learning.

Four Lines of Inquiry: Knowing and Thinking about Women as Learners

Our knowledge about women's learning is based on research published since 1975 and emerges from the intersection of four lines of inquiry. The first line examines the experiences of girls and women within the educational system. The second comes from studies on the development of self; the third from studies on the nature of the content and processes which appear to dominate the learning of most girls and women; and the fourth from feminist pedagogy and concerns about the education of women, particularly in relation to Women's Studies Programs. I will consider each of these lines of inquiry separately and then attempt to integrate the dominant themes.

1. Women's experiences in the educational system

> *Since the women's movement began, female educators have scolded the educational system for failing to meet the needs of female learners. (Spender & Sarah, 1980)*

Gloria Steinem (1992) suggests that one factor which prevents women from knowing that all is not well for them in the educational system, is that women get good grades, often better than their male counterparts.

> *Since grades are the measure of academic life, they obscure the larger question of what is being learned: that a female student may be getting an A-plus in self-denigration. (Steinem, 1992)*

Steinem reports that research shows that the self-esteem of girls begins at relatively high levels in the elementary grades, begins to fall off in the secondary grades, and declines with women's successful passage through the various levels of colleges and universities.

Joan Gallos (1992) describes the fear and self-doubt that women experienced when they participated in a graduate program on management development, in which they were asked to answer the question "Who am I?"

> *The women felt deep terror that they would not be able to understand, that they wouldn't know what to do, that they would demonstrate that they did not belong (in the college), that they would show everyone their "dumbness." They felt self-doubt that they wouldn't have anything important to say, that their fears about themselves and this undertaking were justified, and they would be lost. (Gallos, 1992)*

Gallos goes on to state that women approach learning with more self-doubt and experiences of alienation than their male counterparts. Because cultural and personal experiences support women's silence, we should not wonder at women's doubts about their ability to make a valued contribution to educational discussions.

Gallos believes that the alienation women experience in the educational system stems from two sources. First, there are important developmental differences between men and women which can effect how each think, know and learn. Second, the basic structures of our educational system – teaching methods and knowledge – are informed by male-based ideas and experiences which may undermine women's approaches to learning.

2. Development of self in two modes: Autonomous and Relational

Gilligan's work on the development of moral reasoning identified a "different voice" in women's conceptions of self and introduced the concept of the "connected self" to expand our understanding of human development. Other writers echo Gilligan's theme in describing the nature and development of a

Table 2

Comparison of Two Modes of Self Definition

(Based on ideas described in Lyons, 1987,1990)

	Separate/Autonomous Self	Connected/Relational Self
Major focus of self definition	Autonomous in relation to others Independence	Connected in relation to others Interdependence
Basis for self definition	Through seeing oneself as if through the eyes of significant others	Through interactive relationships with significant others
Relationships between self and others	Experienced through reciprocity Maintained through impartiality, objectivity and increasing distance between self and others Others are assumed to be more similar than different in comparison to self (making reciprocity possible)	Experienced through interdependence Maintained through concern for other's well-being, understanding needs and contexts of others, and reducing distance between self and others Others are assumed to be more different than similar in comparison to self (making responsiveness necessary)

"separate" or autonomous self and a "connected" or relational self. A comparison of these two forms of self definition is provided in Table 2.

Separate/autonomous self

The traditional view of self development describes the emergence of a separate or autonomous self which is separate from others and independent in its relations with others. Through these predictable sequences of behaviours, the individual moves from an immature self (participating in unequal relationships, feeling powerless and using dependent behaviours) toward a mature, equal, empowered and independent self. Since other persons are assumed to be similar to oneself, the individual is able to understand the others' points of view without much difficulty. Reciprocity allows the individual to be impartial and objective and to maintain a distance between self and others.

Connected/relational self

Women's views of self development (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986) describe, in addition to the separate or autonomous self, the emergence of a connected or relational self that is linked to others yet *interdependent* in relationships. The development of this self is viewed as a multi-dimensional and complex process, emerging through life's expected and unexpected experiences and changes. (Schlossberg, 1984) It is defined and discovered through interacting with others around mutual concerns for each other's well-being and of responsiveness to the needs of others. (Lyons, 1990)

Since others are assumed to be different than self, mutual relationships are maintained and sustained by considering others in terms of their specific contexts and needs, but not necessarily in terms of strict equality.

> *To be responsive implies seeing others in their own terms and being open to different ways in which others make sense of their own situations and experiences.*

These two different forms of self development are described as being gender-related but not gender-specific. Most of us define ourselves in terms consistent with both the connected and separate self. Men and women who have reached maturity in their self development are able to use and combine both ways of defining self, more or less equally.

> *Since we know that an individual's self-concept is a central factor in learning, we can assume that the manner in which learners describe themselves becomes a crucial element in how they go about learning.*

Understanding changes leading to maturity as learners

Ways of thinking: dualistic, multiplistic, relativistic

What changes do women and men go through as they become more mature and more competent as learners? Much of this research began as a re-examination of the ideas of William Perry (1970) who reported that, during their undergraduate years, the thinking of male students shifts from a reliance on dualistic thinking to multiplistic thinking and then to relativistic (or contextual) thinking. Beyond the relativistic phase, the changes that occur in thinking are found not so much in the processes, as in the learner's commitment to ideas and the learning done as a consequence of these commitments.

> *In dualistic thinking, students believe that knowledge is either right or wrong, that the truth of knowledge is certain, and that authority figures cannot (should not) be questioned about truth and knowledge.*
>
> *In multiplistic thinking, students discover that truth and knowledge are sometimes uncertain, that authority figures sometimes disagree with each other about what is true, that students are (sometimes) encouraged to hold ideas and opinions which differ from those of*

> *authorities, and that one can (should) identify one's own ideas and opinions through independent thought.*
>
> *In relativistic thinking, students discover that knowledge can only be understood in relation to the context in which it was developed, that anyone can contribute to the knowledge base which is used in each context, and that truth is what makes sense within each context.*

These shifts in thinking are also found among women. Mary Belenky and her colleagues (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986) report that as college women move away from dualism, they need to understand the ideas and opinions of others (e.g., authorities, classmates) by hearing about the situations which give rise to these ideas and opinions. That is, women appear to introduce a form of relativism into their thinking much earlier than men. One conclusion from this finding is that the early introduction of relativism occurs because most women are more likely to rely on a relational self when they enter formal learning activities.

Based on other studies which re-examined Perry's ideas, Marcia Baxter Magolda (1991) reports that some students, men more often than women, learn most effectively in activities which involve mastery of the material, individual achievement, working with others to challenge one's thinking, and focusing primarily on self-directed learning even in collaborative learning activities. When these learners move to multiplistic thinking, they advocate the use of research and logic to resolve questions where knowledge is uncertain. They view discrepancies between opinions as resulting from the selection of different facts to support their logic, and evaluation as an opportunity to correct both the selection of facts and the logic used.

Some students, more often women than men, learn most effectively in settings which involve connecting what one is learning to one's own experience, establishing connections with other learners, and focusing on a collective or collaborative perspective even in individualized learning situations.

When these learners move to multiplistic thinking, they advocate listening to the ideas of others when knowledge is uncertain as a means for expanding their understanding and reconciling differences. They view discrepancies between opinions as resulting from a different interpretation of the facts, and evaluation as an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the different sides of an issue. These differences, which appear once the learners move beyond dualistic thinking, are consistent with the concepts of separateness and connectedness which we examined in relation to self development.

Describing "separate" and "connected" learners

Nona Lyons (1987) describes both "separate" and "connected" learners. Her description can be expanded by drawing on the work of other writers (Wingfield

Table 3

Comparison of Two Types of Learners

(Based on ideas described in Blenky & others, 1986; Lyons,1987; Wingfield & Haste, 1987, Magolda,1981)

	Separate/Autonomous Learner	Connected/Relational Learner
Learning concerns	Mastery of content. Individual achievement. Ask questions to prove truth or worth of ideas. Identifying truth.	Establishing connection to other learners. Ask questions to understand situations, contexts, & ideas of others. Identifying differences in ideas and opinions.
Learning activities	Challenging ideas of others. Convincing others through logic ,order maintained through agreement to abide by rules. Conflicts resolved through detached imposition of existing rules. Involves doubting or excluding ideas until their worth has been proven. Attempts to reveal truth that is general, impersonal & grounded in rational, logical thought or generalized perception of reality. Prefers self-directed activities; competition in group activities. Objectivity maintained through adopting frame of reference of discipline (e.g. biology,history) or authority(e.g. the law, the instructor). Prefer to hold thought & feeling separate.	Listening when knowledge is uncertain. Convincing others through sharing particulars of personal experiences. Order maintained through implicit agreement to avoid conflict. Conflicts resolved through reconciling differences. Involves believing other's ideas in order to expand one's understanding. Attempts to create truth that is personal, particular & grounded in firsthand experiences or unique historical/ personal events. Prefered collective or collaborative group activities or learning partnerships. Objectivity maintained through understanding frame of reference of other person(s). Prefer to keep thought and feeling together.
Preferred thinking styles	Analytical. Based on patterns & exemplars.	Holistic. Based on narratives & metaphors.
Nature of truth& knowledge	Truth resides in reliability & validity of knowledge. Knowledge separate from knower.	Truth resides in believability of meaning given to experiences or interpretation of facts.
Nature of evaluation	Opportunity to correct errors in selection of facts and logic used. Individual accountable for own learning.	Opportunity to demonstrate understanding of different sides of an issue. Individual accountable to others for learning.

& Haste, 1987) and these are presented in Table 3. Separate learners are autonomous. They tend to use analytic thinking styles, test for truth by looking for consistency and logic in knowledge, and prefer to hold thought and feeling apart from each other.

> *When* separate learners *ask "Why?", they want an answer which will justify the logic or worth of an idea.*

Connected learners are interdependent. They tend to use holistic thinking styles, test for truth by looking for believability in knowledge, and prefer to integrate thought and feeling.

> *When* connected learners *ask "Why?", they want to know how the idea was developed or constructed, preferably by hearing a description of the specific situation or activities in which the idea emerged.*

These writers also remind us that separated and connected approaches to learning are gender-related but not gender-specific.

> *Many men and women are capable of using both approaches. However, more men than women use the separate approach as their dominant way of thinking and learning, and more women than men use the connected approach as their dominant way of thinking and learning.*

4. Feminist Pedagogy: processes and teaching methods

> Feminist education *is concerned with the* content *of what is taught in the formal education of girls and women;* feminist pedagogy *with the processes and teaching methods used.*

Feminist educators are committed to the development of women-centred teaching methods, knowledge sources and materials. Processes and teaching methods which are most often associated with feminist pedagogy have been derived in part, from the research we have considered in the first part of this paper and in part, from the experiences of students and instructors in Women's Studies Programs, in using women-centred teaching methods and knowledge. (Schneidewind, 1983; Hayes, 1989)

Nine ideas which inform feminist pedagogy:

1. Women-only programs are recommended for women who are re-entering the educational system, who are entering a new field of study or training, or whose

self-esteem is low. In mixed-gender groups, women tend to speak less frequently and feel less empowered. (Tannen, 1990) Women-only groups are more supportive and less risky than mixed-gender groups. (Spender & Sarah, 1980)

2. Women-centred content, in which the knowledge and experience of women are the central theme, is recommended in order to correct the fact that women have been excluded from the knowledge base in most areas of study. Women-centred content includes both knowledge created by women and knowledge about women and their concerns and interests. (Smith, 1987)
3. A connected learning environment is one which utilizes small groups to foster the development of trust, thus allowing for self-disclosure; of mutual respect, thus allowing each woman to share her experience and knowledge comfortably; and of connectedness among learners and instructional staff. (Schneidewind, 1983)

> *A connected learning environment allows for the sharing of the knowledge derived from personal experience and collective searches for shared meaning and knowledge.*

4. Cooperative and collaborative learning structures, such as small groups and learning partnerships, help to minimize hierarchial relationships and equalize power relationships among learners and between learners and instructor. (Schneidewind, 1983)
5. Cooperative evaluation techniques encourage all the learners in each small group to be accountable both for their own learning and for the learning done by others. (Hayes, 1989)
6. Cooperative communication styles occur when each speaker recognizes and builds on the contributions made by other speakers. Turn taking is encouraged with a Talking Circle, in which an object is passed and the only person who may speak is the one holding the object. (Hayes, 1989) Belenky and others (1986) refer to the process of recognizing and augmenting the ideas brought forward by others as the "believing game." They compare it with the "doubting game" in which each new speaker attempts to find errors in the logic of the ideas proposed by previous speakers or ignores these ideas by introducing new ideas.
7. Shared leadership works best in cooperative learning structures. Leadership tasks include sharing the responsibilities for listening to others, being patient, synthesizing ideas, facilitating interpersonal interactions and so on. (Lyons, 1990)
8. Holistic approaches to teaching and learning are perceived as better for female learners than analytical approaches. (Hayes, 1989) These focus first on the global aspects of a subject before examining its various parts; and involve

moving back and forth between the whole and the parts. Unlike analytical approaches, holistic approaches provide opportunities to integrate thoughts and feelings, theory and practice, to bring together and find connections between specific, concrete experiences and generalized or abstracted versions of experiences. Appropriate activities might include: consciousness-raising, journal-keeping, group discussions, case studies, experiments, simulations, and so on.

> *Holistic approaches also call on the instructor to engage in passionate teaching rather than the objective and distanced teaching typical of analytical approaches.*

9. Teaching for transformation and emancipation is implicit in feminist pedagogy. (Weiler, 1988) Through the use of the previous eight techniques, women develop the attitudes, abilities and knowledge they will need to work individually and collectively for improvements in their homes, educational institutions, communities and workplaces.

> *Feelings of empowerment emerge as women share their experiences and establish connections to other women through connected learning processes.*

To become more mature as learners, women need to construct their own ideas and opinions, make commitments to an idea or action, develop strategies for defending this choice and for acting congruently with it. This step in the learning process requires that individuals be able to integrate separate learning with their connected learning processes as they move toward a more integrated approach. When women begin to use constructed knowing, they begin a process of personal transformation. At this stage, their knowledge becomes an integral part of their self definition; and further changes in knowledge and self definition continually transform and reconstruct each other. (Hayes, 1989)

Women as Learners: A Summary of Ideas

Ways to increase women's active participation

When we integrate the ideas which have been presented in this paper, we find some consistent themes. We know that self-esteem and self-confidence are crucial to active participation in learning activities. Women's self-esteem is generally lower than that of their male counterparts and this difference increases at higher educational levels. Since adult education theory prescribes active participation as a means for improving learning, our educational practices should include ways to increase the active participation of women. Three suggestions for doing this are found in the feminist literature:

1. include women in the development of the knowledge base used in the learning activities as both sources and creators of knowledge;
2. include information about and of interest to women in the learning materials to be used in any program; and
3. include teaching methods which are consistent with women's dominant forms of self development and learning.

We know that the nature of the self which enters into the learning process affects what and how an individual learns. Our knowledge about the forms which this self might take has been expanded by feminist writers. We now know that both men and women use both separate and connected definitions of self; and that women are more likely than men to describe a connected self, while men are more likely than women to describe a separate self. We now know that both men and women develop through dualistic, multiplistic and relativistic ways of thinking; but the nature of the knowing and learning processes in these three types of thinking may differ for separate and connected knowers.

Effects of "separate" and "connected" knowing on learning

Separate knowing and learning can be understood as the preferred way of knowing for the separate self. Separate knowers and learners prefer knowledge which presents an objective, generalized and logical version of reality, which holds thoughts and feelings separate from each other; and which can be presented by an expert or authority figure through presentation-based techniques, such as lectures. Separate knowing calls for discussions in which learners can distance themselves from each other and ideas can be challenged and debated, processes which involve the potential for interpersonal conflict.

Connected knowing and learning can be understood as the preferred way of knowing for the connected self. Connected knowers and learners prefer knowledge which presents a personalized, specific and particularized version of reality; which connects thoughts and feelings; and which can be presented by co-learners through discussion-based techniques, such as consciousness-raising. Connected knowing calls for discussions in which learners can connect to other learners and ideas can be shared, processes in which the participants would prefer to avoid interpersonal conflict.

Integrating Women's Learning, Feminist Pedagogy and Adult Education Practice

Finally, it is time to think about how we, as adult educators, can integrate the ideas encountered in this chapter with our current educational practices in order to equitably support the learning of both women and men.

> *A sensitive reader may have decided, by now, that the description of feminist pedagogy does not differ that much from good adult education practice.*

In fact, adult education and feminist pedagogy appear to share values and approaches related to establishing an environment of mutual trust and respect; the provision of learning materials which centre on the learners and their concerns and interests; the use of co-operative learning structures, communication processes and shared leadership.

Some differences between adult education and feminist pedagogy

There are also some important differences between adult education and feminist pedagogy, particularly with regard to the emphasis placed on various aspects of the learning process. The first difference relates to the focus of our attention.

> *Feminist pedagogy calls for a focus on the individual and her personal experience as both an initial learning activity and as an ongoing part of the entire learning process. This approach is seen as important in building self-esteem and empowering the learner. In adult education, such a personal focus is often used for climate setting purposes but may not be considered to be an integral part of all learning activities.*

In a world in which time is money, many adult educators do not want to be seen as wasting a learner's time by encouraging them to engage in the kind of personal talk which best supports women's learning.

> *I believe that from such talk, important learning emerges and the men are equally likely to benefit from having opportunities to talk about knowledge derived from personal experience, compare this knowledge with theoretical knowledge, and construct integrated knowledge as an integral part of all learning activities.*

A second difference lies in the manner by which individual learners establish personal learning objectives.

> *In the feminist approach, individuals are encouraged to identify the personal connection between who they are and their personal concerns, and what they want to learn (that is, issues to be inquired into, skills to be mastered, problems to be solved).*

In adult education, learners may be encouraged to set their own learning objectives, but these objectives are often stated in terms which are more consistent with separate knowing and learning, rarely identifying the means for building specific connections to the learner's personal identity.

> *A third difference focuses on the emphasis placed, in the feminist approach, on maintaining a holistic connection between thinking*

> *and feeling, experience and ideas, theory and practice, reflection and action.*

Holistic connections are often missing in adult education., Good adult education practices encourage instructors and learners to attend to feelings when these interfere with learning or teaching activities. The feminist approach would encourage instructors and learners to consider how their feelings are connected to the ideas they are discussing, as a means for furthering their understanding and knowledge.

> *A fourth difference concerns the emphasis placed, in feminist pedagogy, on cooperative and collaborative learning.*

Feminist pedagogy hopes to facilitate "other-connected" learning as the primary objective; with self-directed or autonomous learning as an objective once the learner feels empowered and ready to make a commitment. On the other hand, adult education has traditionally placed a strong emphasis on self-directed learning as the primary objective; with "other-connected" learning as an objective only when it seems necessary or appropriate for reaching the primary objective.

> *A fifth difference lies in the use of cooperative evaluation techniques in which learners are accountable for their own learning and that of others.*

That is, individual achievement is less important than group progress. In most educational institutions, the use of cooperative evaluation techniques may be perceived as denying individuals the right to be evaluated on the basis of personal achievement.

> *A sixth difference concerns teaching for transformation and emancipation as a value which should present few problems to adult educators since good adult education practice encourages such teaching in all groups of learners.However, as a practice, such teaching is hard to accomplish. Many adult learning programs operate under time constraints and institutional expectations. Transformative learning takes time and may not occur within the time frame imposed by the institution (or the next instructor). Designing learning programs to deliberately accomplish transformative learning objectives is difficult.*

Transformative learning objectives may be more easily accomplished through the indirect influence of the instructor's behaviour on the learner. If the instructor models competitive or authoritative behaviour, then the learners will respond with very traditional, even passive participation and little transformative learning is likely to occur. If the instructor models collaboration, trust, respect for others, recognition of the contributions of others, the sharing of knowledge derived from personal experience, the integration of thought and feeling, separate and connected knowing and learning, and so on, then transformative learning is more likely to occur.

We, as adult educators, can make programs and learning activities more responsive to the needs of both men and women. It's up to us.

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RESEARCH (1)

THEORIES OF ADULT LEARNING

M.T. Sexton

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the hypothesis that there are no fundamental differences between how adults learn and how children learn, and therefore the approach to helping adults and children learn should be fundamentally the same.

This hypothesis arises from the questions of whether adults learn in a different way to children, and if so, what are the essential differences? Are separate theories of adult learning sustainable, and if so, what are the implications for helping adults to learn?

Some of the viewpoints on learning discussed in this paper could best be called principles, some are theories of learning and some would best be described as principles or theories of teaching or instruction.

A principle is taken to mean a generalised statement which arises from, or can be verified by, experiment or observation. As a number of related principles are built up, these can sometimes be organised into a broader concept of how learning is taking place – then we have a theory.

A theory is defined by the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as

> *a scheme or system of ideas or statements held as an explanation or account of a group of facts or phenomena. A hypothesis that has been confirmed or established by observation or experiment and is propounded or accepted as accounting for the known facts.*

Adults are taken in this paper to be people over the age of, say, 16 who have left the formal school system. 'Adult' in this context includes people who have gone back to formal education as mature-age students, after a period in the workforce. Thus we are concerned here with all types of informal and more formalised adult education, with industrial and vocational training and with the learning that is going on continually in an adult's day to day life.

The definition of learning which has been adopted is that of Gagné.

> *Learning is a change in human disposition or capability which can be retained and which is not simply ascribable to the process of growth.* (Gagné, 1977, p.5.)

FIVE IMPORTANT LEARNING THEORIES relating to adults

(1) Student centred learning

Carl Rogers is a clinical psychologist, concerned with psychological therapy, which he sees as being basically a learning process. (Rogers, 1951, p.132).

Rogers developed a theory of personality and behaviour from studying adults undergoing psychological therapy, then applied that theory to education. He proposed the term 'student centred teaching' as analagous to his 'client centred therapy.'

In his book *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers proposed some principles of human learning.

First. *Human beings have a natural potentiality for learning. They are curious about their world until and unless this curiosity is blunted by their experience in our educational system . . . It is a tendency which can be trusted* (Rogers, 1969, p.157).

He says that

> *much of present education appears to be operationally based on the assumption 'you can't trust the student'. Acting on this assumption, the teacher must supply motivation, information, organise the material and must use . . . tests at every turn to coerce the student into the desired activities* (Rogers, 1951, p.427).

On the other hand, he maintains that

> *you can trust the student . . . to desire to learn in every way which will maintain or enhance self . . . to make use of resources which will serve this end . . . to evaluate himself in ways which will make for self progress* (ibid, p.427).

Rogers' other principles of learning are:

- *Significant learning takes place when the subject is perceived by the student as having relevance to his own purposes.*
- *Learning which involves a change in self organisation in the perception of oneself – is threatening and tends to be resisted.*
- *Those learnings which are threatening to the self are more easily perceived and assimilated when external threats are at a minimum.*
- *Much significant learning is acquired through doing.*
- *Learning is facilitated when the student participates responsibly in the learning process.*
- *Self initiated learning which involves the whole person of the learner – feelings as well as intellect – is the most lasting and pervasive* (Rogers, 1969, p.157).

(2) An Andragogical theory of adult learning

Malcolm Knowles points out that 'pedagogy' means the art and science of teaching children. The word is derived from the Greek *paid*, meaning child and *agogus*, meaning leader of. (Knowles, 1973, p.42). Knowles has developed a theory which he has labelled 'androgogy', derived from the Greek *aner*, meaning man. (ibid, p.43).

Knowles concedes that the word is not new.

> *It was used in Germany as early as 1833 and has been used extensively during the last decade in Yugoslavia, France and Holland* (ibid. p.43).

Dusan Savicev, Professor of Education at the University of Belgrade, defines andragogy as

> *the discipline which studies the adult education process . . . or the science of adult education* (Anon., 1969).

Knowles has defined andragogy as

> *the art and science of helping adults learn.* (Knowles, 1970, p.38)

Knowles says that as an individual matures, his need and capacity to be self-directing increases, steadily to adolescence, then rapidly. His desire to organise his learning to solve his own problems increases in parallel.

Knowles bases his approach to helping adults to learn on

> *four assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that*

> *are different from the assumptions about child learning on which traditional pedagogy is based* (Knowles, 1970, p.39).

These assumptions are that, as a person matures his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality towards one of being a self-directing human being. Second, he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning. Third, his readiness to learn becomes orientated increasingly to his social roles as a breadwinner, father (or mother). And finally his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application; his orientation of learning changes from subject to problem centredness.

To expand a little on these assumptions:-

Changes in self-concept: Knowles says that adulthood is reached when a person sees himself as self-directing and not dependent. The child's dependent role is a passive one of receiving and storing up the information adults have decided children should have. Knowles says that

> *interestingly, in the kindergarten and early primary years our teachers involve students in planning and conducting learning activities to a considerable degree. But as the child moves up the educational ladder, he encounters more and more of the responsibility for his learning being taken by the teacher, the curriculum planners and his parents. The net effect is to freeze him into a self-concept of dependency. But something dramatic happens to his self-concept when an individual defines himself as an adult. He begins to see his normal role in society no longer as being a full time learner. He sees himself increasingly as a producer or doer.* (Knowles, 1970, p.39).

The role of experience: As an individual matures he accumulates more experiences with which to relate new learning. Andragogy decreases emphasis on 'transmittal' techniques and increases emphasis on experimental techniques which tap the experiences of the learners.

Readiness to learn:

> *Pedagogy assumes that children are ready to learn those things they 'ought' to because of their biological and academic development, whereas andragogy assumes that learners are ready to learn those things they 'need' to because of the developmental phases they are approaching in their roles as workers, spouses, parents, organisational members and leaders, leisure time users and the like.* (Knowles, 1973, p.47).

Orientation to learning: The assumption is that children have been conditioned to have a subject centred orientation to most learning, whereas adults tend to have a problem centred orientation.

> *The child's time perspective towards learning is one of postponed application. Most primary school learning is aimed at getting into high school. The adult . . . comes into an educational activity largely because he is experiencing some inadequacy in coping with current life problems. He wants to apply tomorrow what he learns today. He has a problem centred orientation to learning.* (Knowles, 1973, p.47).

(3) Bruner's theory of instruction

J.S. Bruner's book *Towards a Theory of Instruction* (Bruner, 1966) has important applications for adult learning.

Bruner is searching for a theoretical framework of the learning-teaching process which will help predict how instruction might be organised more effectively.

Bruner says

> *A theory of instruction is prescriptive in the sense that it sets forth rules concerning the most effective way of achieving knowledge or skills. One might ask why a theory of instruction is needed, since psychology already contains theories of learning and of development. But (they) are descriptive rather than prescriptive . . . A theory of instruction is concerned with improving rather than describing learning.* (Bruner, 1966, p.40).

His theory of instruction has four main features. It specifies: the experiences which most effectively pre-dispose the individual towards learning; the ways in which a body of knowledge should be structured so that it can be most readily grasped by the learner; the most effective sequences in which to present the materials to be learned; the nature and pacing of rewards and punishments in the process of learning and teaching.

Bruner's approach has been labelled 'discovery learning'. He emphasises the benefits in setting up learning situations so that the learner discovers for himself the concepts or relationships involved in solving a problem. Discussing a social studies curriculum for children, Bruner says

> *If we do nothing else we should somehow give to children a respect for their own powers of thinking, for their power to generate good questions, to come up with interesting informed guesses. So much of social studies to now has been congeries of facts. We should like to make the study more rational, more amenable to the use of mind in the large, rather than mere memorising.* (ibid, p.96).

(4) Gagné and information processing theories

R.M. Gagné, in his *Essentials of Learning for Instruction* (Gagné, 1975) describes a theory of learning which he calls the 'information processing theory'. This theory likens the learning process to the workings of a computer. Physical stimulation of the learner's senses is transferred into neural messages, which in turn undergo other transformations in the nervous system so they can be stored and later recalled. The recalled information is transformed again into neural messages which control the action of muscles. The result is speech or other types of movement indicating that a performance has been learned. These various forms of transformation are called learning processes.

> *They are what goes on inside the learner's head. It is these processes, their characteristics and their manner of functioning which constitute the essence of modern learning theory.* (Gagné, 1975, p.15).

Gagné has carefully observed the results of human learning and identified several outcomes of learning. He categorises the outcomes of learning in terms of distinct learned human capabilities, which he calls verbal information, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, attitudes and motor skills. (Gagné, 1977). He says

> *Learning is activated by a variety of kinds of stimulation from the learner's environment. This stimulation is the input to the process of learning. The output is a modification of behaviour that is observed as human performance.* (Gagné, 1975, p.49).

These human performances will be identifiable as one of the types of learned capabilities or learning outcomes listed above.

(5) **Skinner**

B.F. Skinner maintains that he has not proposed a learning theory as such; but his explanations of at least some types of learning have had a profound effect on teaching methods with both adults and children. He says that the conclusions from his direct experimental observations of animals and people form a science of behaviour, from which can be derived a technology of teaching. He argues that the learning of a particular response depends on the reaction which the learner receives to that response when it is emitted. His science of behaviour is the association or relationship between a response emitted by a learner and the reinforcement of that response. The process by which behaviour is reinforced is called 'operant conditioning', because the learning of a particular response depends on how the environment operates on that response once it has been emitted.

> *Behaviour is shaped and maintained by its consequences.*
> (Skinner, 1972, p.25)

Skinner's approach to learning can be condensed into two rules, first, that responses that are reinforced are learned; second, responses that are punished are suppressed and an organism avoids or escapes from punishment. A technology of teaching, in Skinner's terms, is the arrangement of reinforcements to encourage learning. Skinner has defined teaching on several occasions. For example,

> *a teaching method is simply a way of arranging an environment which expedites learning* (Skinner, 1963, p.201)
>
> or
>
> *Teaching is the arrangement of contingencies of reinforcement under which students learn* (Skinner, 1968, p.64).

The systematic application of Skinner's concept of learning has given us programmed learning, which he defines as

> *the construction of carefully arranged sequences of contingencies leading to the terminal performances which are the objects of education* (Skinner, 1963, p.195).

COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF THE FIVE THEORIES

The five contributions outlined take a wide range of views about learning, which impinge in varying ways on our hypothesis that there are no fundamental differences between how children and adults learn. Carl Rogers' principles of human learning, taken together, are more a philosophy of learning and teaching, than a theory. Rogers' approach has been called a humanistic one. He pins his faith on human nature; he is optimistic about people's motives and assumes that people naturally want to learn. This approach should be equally applicable to adults as to children; but in practice, as Rogers points out, people's natural curiosity and desire to learn can be blunted by experience of our educational system.

> *Adult educators often have to work hard at establishing a learning climate to allow people to overcome the negative effects of their earlier unsatisfactory school experiences and revert to their natural, uninhibited, positive, optimistic approach to learning.* (Rogers, 1969, p.427).

Rogers' humanistic philosophy is subscribed to by many successful educators who work with both adults and children. It is an approach which seems equally applicable at any stage in a learner's development.

Malcolm Knowles' andragogical theory of adult learning is also both a philosophy of teaching and a set of principles on which education might be based. Although he adopts the word 'andragogy' to describe an approach to adult education, as distinct from the traditional teaching of children, he acknowledges that it's not a case of black and white.

> *I am not talking about a clear cut differentiation between children and adults as learners. Rather, I am differentiating between the assumptions about learners that have traditionally been made by those who practise pedagogy, in contrast to the assumptions made in andragogy. I believe that the assumptions of andragogy apply to children and youth as they mature and that they too will come to be taught more and more andragogically* (Knowles, 1973, p.43).

As children mature, Knowles claims that pedagogy is practised increasingly inappropriately.

> *The result is a growing gap between the need and the ability to be self-directing and this produces tension, resistance, resentment and often rebellion.* (Knowles, 1973, p.55).

Knowles' argument for what he has called andragogy can equally be used to support other problem centred approaches to learning as distinct from subject centred approaches. He says

> *Up to the early part of the 20th Century the time span of major cultural changes required several generations, whereas in the 20th Century several cultural revolutions have already occurred and the pace is accelerating . . . knowledge gained by the time a person is 21 is largely obsolete by the time he is 40 . . . so it is no longer functional to define education as a process of transmitting what is known. It must now be defined as a lifelong process of discovering what is not known* (Knowles, 1920, p.37).

J.S. Bruner is regarded as the leading exponent of the 'discovery' aproach to learning. He makes a very similar point to Knowles when he says that the aim of instruction is not for the learner to commit facts to memory, but to teach him to participate in the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge.

> *Knowing is a process, not a product,* Bruner emphasises (Bruner, 1966, p.72).

Bruner's theory of instruction and his advocacy of discovery learning is also just as applicable to children as it is to adults. He acknowledges a role for rewards and punishments in his theory of instruction. (Bruner, 1966, p.41). From this point of view his theory overlaps with the technology of teaching propounded by Skinner. Bruner says

> *As learning progresses, there is a point at which it is better to shift away from extrinsic rewards such as teacher's praise, towards the intrinsic rewards inherent in solving a complex problem for oneself.*

Skinner says that achievement in the task itself can be a reinforcement (Skinner, 1961, p.173), but the general thrust of the two theories is very different. Skinner's technology of teaching is mechanistic, some would argue dehumanising; whereas Bruner's writings are alive with enthusiasm.

for the spark of human contact between learner and teacher.

Jamieson (1969) made an interesting comparison between the ability of people of widely different ages to learn a mathematical concept by discovery learning and programmed learning. There was a slight advantage to the discovery method for older subjects (mean age 57) and for children (mean age 11), but the intermediate groups aged 20–30 and 30–40 learned as well by either method.

Gagné's information processing theory of learning is in a different category from other learning theories. It is an attempt to construct a model to explain the psychological processes which go on within the brain during the process of learning. This type of theory is universal, as the process of learning it describes applies to people of any age. Such a theory does provide a basis for explaining differences in learning abilities with age, which will be discussed later in this paper. Gagné calls his information processing theory of learning the 'modern' learning theory. The group of theories which attempt to explain the electronic processes of the brain do seem to provide the most scope for incorporating our quickly increasing knowledge about how the brain functions. Gagné's theory is less mechanistic than Skinner's because Gagné does provide for control by the individual over his own thought processes and actions. Gagné calls this 'executive control'. However this is still a vague part of his theory which leaves a long way to go in explaining the complexities of human personality and creativity in terms of chemical and electrical processes in the brain.

Broschart (1976) discusses the implication of information processing models for adult learning. He points out that such models are not consistent with a strict behaviouristic view, because they provide for some internal control.

> *The learner, in effect, recycles the information he has already stored in modified forms and may in fact add to it or revise it* (Broschart, 1976, p.9).

The analogy to a computer is often used, but man's capabilities go beyond those of computers.

> *He can and does process information into hypotheses, concepts, strategies and then initiates actions (behaviours) based on this processing ability* (ibid, p.9).

Broschart, reflecting the viewpoint of Di Vesta (1974) says that information processing models imply that

> *the older learner has a much different learning response than does the youngster, because he has a greater volume of accumulated information or experience which affects his response to any new information* (ibid, p.8).

The argument is that an adult is more concerned with 'making sense' of new information in relation to what he already knows.

> *This means that a large part of the adult learning task is seeking the relevance or the right relationship of new inputs to previous experience* (ibid, p.9).

The implication is that the older person is likely to get more set in his ways than a child and reject information if it conflicts with his existing knowledge.

AGE AND LEARNING

Psychologists concerned with training have accumulated a lot of data on the effects of age on learning. These studies begin with the classic work of Thorndike (1928). Thorndike exploded as myth the thesis that older people could not learn. Adults do learn; the decline in learning ability with age is slight.

Many studies on age and learning have involved elderly people (say, over 60), often comparing them with learners in their twenties. Information comparing adults (of any age) with children is much sparser.

Studies of changes in learning ability with age can be divided into longitudinal studies and cross sectional studies. Longitudinal studies follow the same group of people over a number of years. Cross sectional studies involve a group of people ranging in age at the one time. Knox points out that

> *Longitudinal studies of learning ability, mainly based on re-administrations of intelligence tests, indicate a high degree of stability between 20 and 50 years of age and even beyond* (Knox, 1977, p.415).

Care must be taken when interpreting cross sectional studies of learning ability and age, because of the effect of external factors such as differing opportunities for schooling in different generations and differing social conditions. The measuring instrument (usually some form of intelligence test) also has a significant effect on results of studies into the change in learning ability with age. Welford says

> *There is a strong suggestion that impairment of ability to register new information in old age is to a great extent an artefact.* (Welford, 1956).

While older subjects may show up rather poorly when compared with younger subjects in laboratory experiments, they may perform just as well in a more practical environment where they can see a useful purpose in the learning.

Brunner (1959) in an overview of adult education research, also points out that anomalous conclusions have been reached from the results of intelligence tests on adults. The 'Army Alpha' test administered to U.S. soldiers during World War I, and other intelligence tests require tasks to be completed 'against the clock'. If one accepts the definition of intelligence as the power to learn, Brunner says

> *performance is a function of many factors such as motivation, physical health, and possible physiological declines in reaction time, hearing and vision. A test with time limits thus confuses the power to learn with the efficiency of performance. The actual intelligence of adults is thus under-estimated. Eliminating the speed factor significantly reduces the difference between adults and youth in intelligence test scores.* (Brunner, 1959, p.10.)

Jeeves (1962) has reviewed the effect of age on the assimilation of new information. He discusses this in three stages: reception of information, processing of information – i.e. making deductions and generalisations, and storage of information – short and long term memory. Discussing the ability to process information, Jeeves says the elderly are slower –

> *a phenomen basic to all mental processes . . . . explained by the*

> *ageing of the nervous system.* (Jeeves, 1962, p.282.)

He argues that the observed decline of learning with age may be largely a result of a reduced capacity in the short term memory of older people. This is supported for example, by experiments by Tallard (1968) in which subjects between 77 and 89 remembered less than half the items of a 20–25 year old group in a task involving immediate recall of meaningful three letter words. To learn a task effectively, a person must be able to hold enough information in his short term memory to obtain a conceptual framework of the task involved. A practical implication of this for training is that older people need to tackle a new task in smaller steps.

Cattell (1963) postulates that human intelligence is made up of two main components, which he calls fluid intelligence and crystallised intelligence. This theory has important implications for how people learn at different ages. The effectiveness of the short term memory is determined by the level of fluid intelligence. This component of intelligence also affects the ability to form concepts and reason abstractly. Crystallised intelligence consists of the ability to manipulate accumulated knowledge. Ability with vocabulary tests and reading comprehension depend on crystallised intelligence. Reviewing the implications of Cattell's theory on how adults learn, Knox (1977) says fluid intelligence is independent of experience and education. Crystallised intelligence depends on the level of formal education and how much knowledge the individual extracts from the social and physical environment. Both forms of intelligence increase during childhood and into adolescence. However, fluid intelligence tends to peak during adolescence when the individual matures physically, and declines gradually during adulthood as a proportion of the neural structures fail because of injury and the ageing process.

> *By contrast, crystallised intelligence continues to increase gradually throughout adulthood. When untimed tests were used, especially in longitudinal studies, the scores related to crystallised intelligence were the same or higher in the fifties as in the twenties. During adulthood, as fluid intelligence decreases and as crystallised intelligence increases, general learning ability remains relatively stable, but the older person tends to increasingly compensate for the loss of fluid intelligence by greater reliance on crystallised intelligence – to substitute wisdom for brilliance.* (Knox, 1977, p.421.)

Flaherty (1971) has also drawn on Cattell's concepts of fluid and crystallised intelligence to propose a generalised theory of learning. She says

> *Each of these dimensions has a profound influence on the development of an individual's abilities. The fluid dimension appears to determine how well an individual will perform in a novel situation in which he cannot react on the basis of previous experience. Hence fluid intelligence determines the extent to which a person can transfer his past experience to new situations. Crystallised intelligence reflects the extent to which an individual has mastered the skills and knowledge of his culture; that is, his store of proven 'aids' to problem solving.* (Flaherty, 1971, p.189).

Flaherty suggests that

> *An individual solves a problem (or learns) by one of two methods. Either he uses his fluid intelligence for reasoning . . .*

11

> *or he calls upon his store of 'aids' to problem solving and applies these directly* (ibid, p.189).

Neither approach is used exclusively, but the person probably tries experience first and if this fails, brings his fluid intelligence to bear on the problem.

This explanation of problem solving behaviour is somewhat different to that of Gagné, who has proposed the term 'cognitive strategy' – one of his eight outcomes of learning, to describe how we go about solving problems. Cognitive strategies are part of the 'executive control' in his information processing model of learning (Gagné, 1977, p.53). As learners learn and store intellectual skills and other capabilities, they are also developing ways to improve their self-regulation of the internal processes associated with learning.

> *They are learning how to learn, how to remember, how to carry out the reflective and analytical thought that leads to more learning. As individuals continue to learn they become increasingly capable of self-instruction, or independent learning.* (ibid, p.167.)

CONCLUSION

Feringer poses the question with which we began this paper.

> *What is unique about adult learning?* (Feringer, 1978, p.22.)

He says that

> *All research indicates the intellectual processes of learning (or intelligence) are the same, regardless of IQ, although depth of understanding and speed of learning will vary enormously . . . we know that most abilities or traits are independent of age.* (ibid. p.22.)

He points out that the science of andragogy, proposed by Knowles, is not based on mental functioning, but on

> *applied strategies and assumptions about adult desires (for participation, relevance, etc.)* (ibid, p.22).

He suggests that we look more critically at what happens when a group of people are learning, to decide which, if any, factors vary with the learner's age.

He lists the factors involved as –

- the learning objectives
- the learners' backgrounds
- management of the group of learners
- mental functions
- structure of the discipline being learned
- instructional strategies
- the psychological environment (motivation, human needs, etc.).

Feringer says that the criteria for each of these factors are universal in all learning situations, regardless of age and IQ. For example, the principle that learners should participate in deciding their learning objectives is just as true for children as it is for adults. He then argues that

> *there is no such separate learning discipline (for adults) as andragogy as defined by Knowles* (ibid, p.21).

The evidence and theories reviewed in this paper generally seem to support the hypothesis that there are no fundamental differences between how adults learn and how children learn and therefore the approach to helping adults and children learn should be fundamentally the same. Rogers' humanistic philosophy is an approach which seems equally applicable at any stage in a learner's development. Knowles himself acknowledges that he is not talking about a clear cut differentiation between children and adults as learners. Bruner's theory of instruction and his advocacy of discovery learning are just as applicable to children as they are to adults. Gagné's information processing theory is universal, as the process of learning it describes applies to people of any age.

However, Cattell's theory of fluid and crystallised intelligence does imply some differences in how children and adults learn, and consequently that instructional strategies should vary with the learner's age. The adult relies more on past experience in problem solving. In Gagné's terms he tends to use a different cognitive strategy. Older adults also have to compensate for a decline in short term memory.

This exploration of how adults learn has turned up as much evidence of how children should be taught, but often aren't, as it has about how adults should be taught. Much of what is taken as accepted practice in adult education has been less widely practised in schools, yet it would seem similarly applicable.

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Reading 1C

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Desmond lived on the streets before a street worker brought him to the School of Aboriginal Education where he found help with his literacy problem. He started in the Introduction to Technical Vocation course and when he got an apprenticeship moved to the Apprenticeship Support Program funded by the Department of Employment and Technical and Further Education.

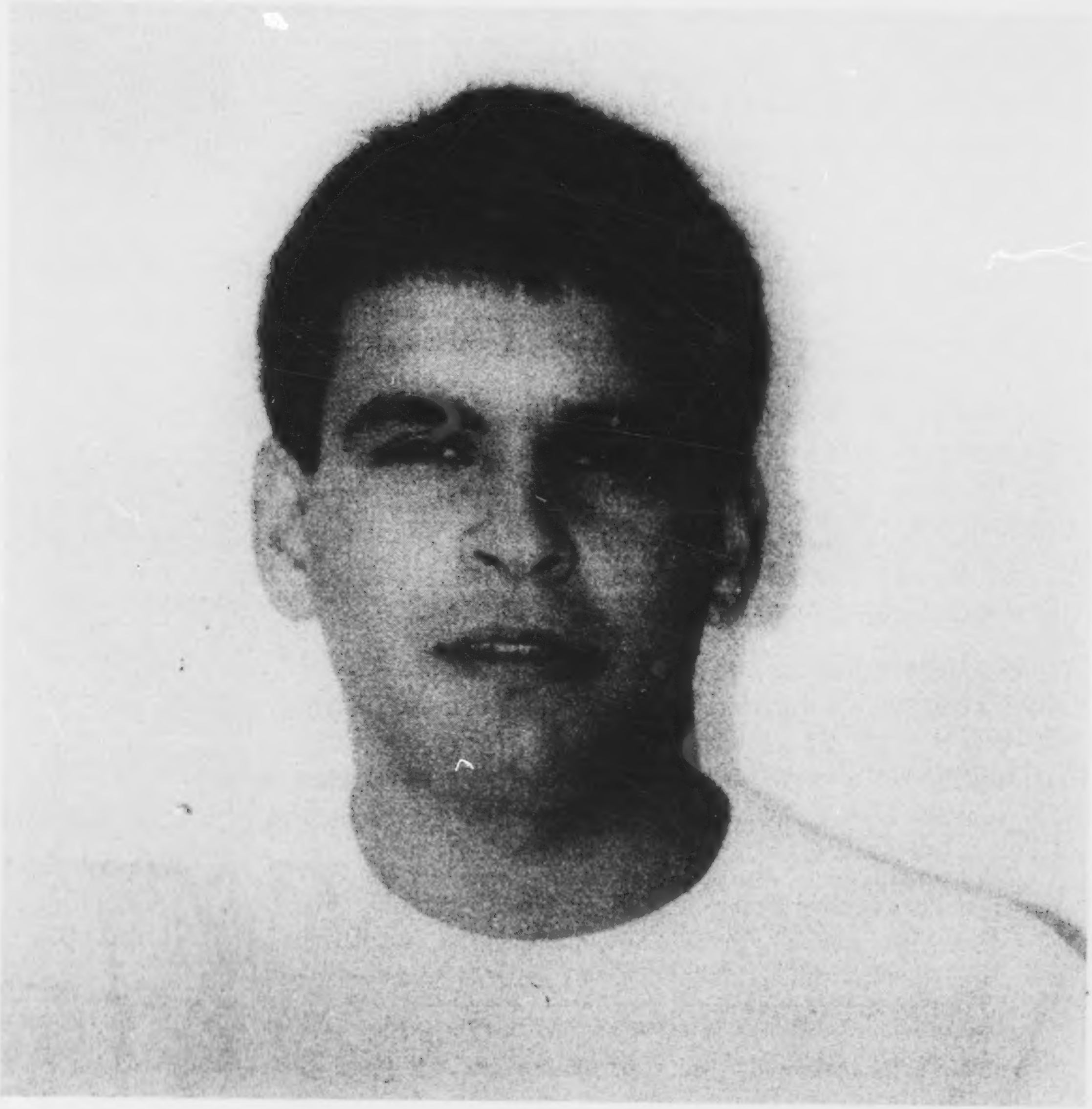
His mind was so confused he couldn't remember two hours back. He couldn't remember from one lesson to the next. We had to sit down and sort out his problems before we could actually get to the literacy/numeracy problem. He was drinking, on drugs.

It took six months to sort out his warrant problem. He was in and out of the courts for six months. It took twelve months for him to sort himself out.

Ervine McCormack,
co-ordinator, DETAFE Apprenticeship Support Program

Off the streets

Desmond



When I was unemployed I had a lot of time on my hands. I'd sleep in till ten or eleven. Then a group of us would start drinking. We'd break into cars and find money. In a day we'd steal about two or three cars, mainly Holdens. If they had a butterfly lock you could put an antenna between it and force the ignition. Away you'd go. Some cars you break in, and if you're lucky, they'd still have the keys in there. You could steal the cassette tape recorder or the mag tyres and sell them.

We'd drive around drinking, going into drugs like marijuana and others. You get tired of marijuana, you know, and then you drink more. I got into a lot of trouble with the police. If I'd kept on I'd probably be in Yatala by now.

Some of the kids I was close to are still drinking, some are in bigger trouble. Some have a job, but not like an apprenticeship, and some are still on the dole.

A street worker brought me to the School of Aboriginal Education (TAFE) from the Aboriginal centre. I used to go to the Aboriginal centre in Wakefield Street to do some weights and keep fit. This became part of my life, in the day time. I'd mess around up there, and you'd get something to eat.

My cousin and I met up and went to TAFE together. He lasted about a year. I'm in my third year of apprenticeship now. At TAFE they sit you down and talk to you about how you can't go through life letting other people make up your mind for you. They teach you at your own pace. They want you to get a job. If you are interested they will guide you to that. You can learn basic skills like maths, metalwork, woodwork and things like that.

As a kid I thought playing around and having fun was better than reading and writing. I moved around a lot.

I lived on the west coast for a while with my mother my dad and my mother's children. I'm the youngest in the family so all my brothers and sisters are step. My dad is German. When we moved to Adelaide my mother died and Dad started drinking and fighting. So I had to go and live with my sister. Then her husband died. My sister and I went off to Point McLeay to live then.

We were in Point McLeay for a while then came back to Adelaide. My sister went to the Riverland. She didn't shoot through, she just stayed a bit long. I was stranded with her children. So my auntie took custody of us and took us back to Point McLeay.

Then I did year ten and some of year eleven in Adelaide. My cousins dropped out of school and I was the only Aboriginal there. I didn't want to go to school. I remember my cousin's brother had a fight and I had something to do with it.

I argued with the headmaster and tried to prove that I was right.

The headmaster said, 'You shouldn't have done that.' And he was right, I shouldn't have. And he said, 'I don't want you in the school no more.' So I left and went on the dole for a few years.

I was in special reading classes at school but I can read average or low average level. I liked to be in classes that messed around because it was more fun.

It's taken time to remember all the things I learnt in school. The college got me into doing homework and preparing projects. I got into the routine of working. I started thinking again.

Klynton, Desmond's guide

Klynton is a project officer at the School of Aboriginal Education. He supports Aboriginal students who have apprenticeships.

There are a lot of government departments who have training schemes and they're looking for recruits all the time. We recommend people for apprenticeships. My job is to liaise with the employers, the employee and the trade schools here to make sure that everything is done right.

If there is a secret to success in getting an apprenticeship it is getting constant guidance and support. This is my job. The apprentice, like Desmond, has to take responsibility for his or herself. We talk a lot about the idea that other people will make up your mind for you if you don't make decisions about your own life.

Sometimes when people start a program they don't feel this responsibility. I remember going to a woman's house and having to take her in my car to get her to the job. After about twelve months they start winning and doing things for themselves. We have to work on confidence, the opportunity for a job, and support and training.

Why this job?

I look at it this way. I've had opportunities. I want to help my people make the most of themselves.

I came from an Aboriginal community at Point Pearce. The population is about 300 and most of them are my relations so this was good for me. My parents went to the school up to grade one or two and they wanted their kids to get an education and get on in the world. We were made to go to school. My father actually wanted us to be policemen or lawyers. None of us could handle being a cop though. We couldn't go in that direction.

When I got to year ten my cousins in my age group all dropped out of school. Some of them who weren't doing well at school were in special classes for Aboriginals. Pretty soon I was the only Aboriginal left in year eleven. So after a while I saw a couple of them working and all of them having a good time.

They'd say, 'Don't worry about your school work. Come and jump in the car. We'll go to Adelaide', or 'let's go and have a drink'.

So three quarters through year eleven I chucked it in and followed them. Well, we used to drink a lot every day. The only time we wouldn't be drinking was when we were spearfishing or swimming.

One day we decided to go to Adelaide and we was all half drunk. So there's two cars, with about four or five in each car. They decided they needed some petrol and some extra cash so we broke into a petrol station. We got caught and got locked up in the irons for a couple of weeks. I ended up in McNallys detention centre. They separated us into different dormitories and stuff, the minute we got there. I didn't like being there because I didn't have any freedom or any friends.

When I got out I went back to Point Pearce and took up basketball and football. I stopped drinking. Then this Southern Community Apprenticeship Training Scheme came up at Point Pearce. This was set up in Aboriginal communities like Point Pearce, Point McLeay and Gerard in conjunction with TAFE. Four people were chosen to learn welding. I was one of them.

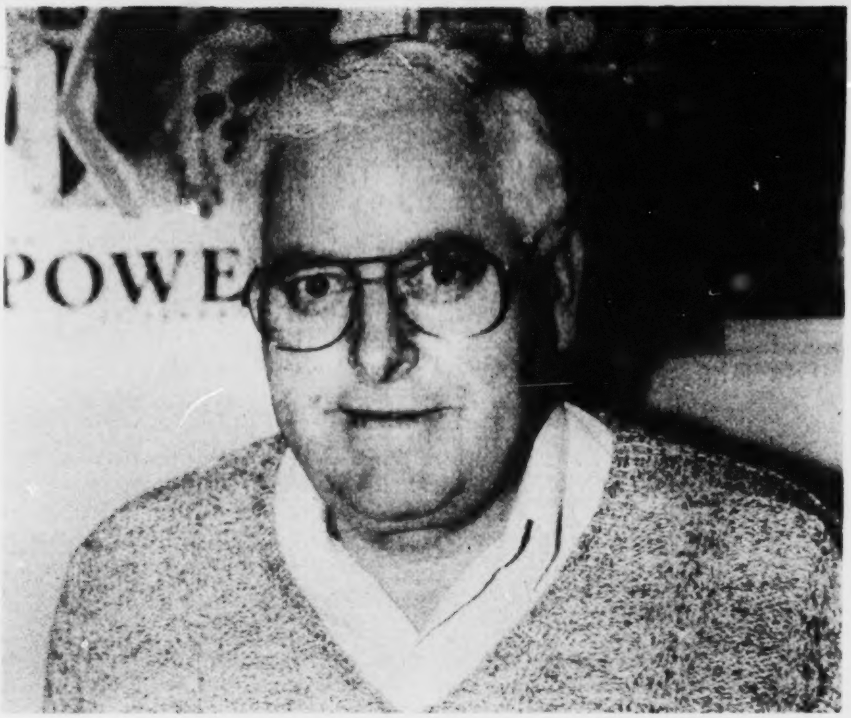
One of my friends did well too, through football. He played in a league team and they got him a job at Telecom. Two or three of them are in and out of jail since school. The others get casual labouring jobs. They don't really like full-time jobs like mine.

What's literacy got to do with apprenticeships?

Getting an apprenticeship or a job is not just a question of literacy. Literacy is not the real problem because most Aboriginal people can read and write words. It's just having the confidence to be able to understand the written questions when you're doing any studies that frightens them I reckon. A lot of people can't write down what they are thinking.

Ervine McCormack

Co-ordinator of the DETAFE Apprenticeship Support Program



Now literacy could be a problem but we don't let it. If we get outside people to test our students they might get a score of three out of thirty or four out of fifty. Then people say these kids aren't literate.

Now if we tutor them and support them they have success. Aboriginal people have to want to learn. They won't do it because they have to. For you and me we've been brought up in the cultural system of 'having to do it' because it's the done thing. It's a tradition, a family tradition. But for Aboriginal people, if they see no reason for doing it, it doesn't get done.

The Aboriginal languages are verbal. Agreements between people were based on trust like a handshake. Aboriginal people have been very trusting and loyal.

In the past some white person might go in and learn the language then start teaching it back to the Aboriginal people. Now that's a total insult. There's been a muck up all the way along. These people have been pushed into a corner and when they come to school the teacher may group them and say, 'Oh well, they don't really want to learn.'

'Look Charlie, you can go and mow the lawn with the gardener today.'

Quite often at school the expectation of learning to read and write is not there. We have to do it differently. We can't go in like white people have gone in before and forget all about Aboriginal traditions and start preaching our own traditions. We will fail. We must learn their methods for learning.

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Now if a person can't read and write well, and fails on the tests, we can't just send them back to a literacy class. First we prepare them so they get into a program. Much of the time they haven't got the proper credentials for entry. Once they are in a program we have found that we can teach very comprehensive material to people who may not have met the entry level requirements.

If we take a north-west person, or traditional Aboriginal into an apprenticeship program at seventeen or eighteen years of age we've got to spend three years preparing them for an apprenticeship. When they leave here and get an apprenticeship it's still too hard. They still need support. They've been on the bottom of the pile for so long. When you tell someone all their life that they are at the bottom of the pile, then it's only very, very special people that get up off the floor.

In our program we train them and support them. We turn them around and they take responsibility for their lives. We work to get them in the right position, like Desmond and Klynton, both from our programs, then it's up to them. They've got to grab the opportunity with both hands.

Klynton had an edge because his parents were aware. They said, 'Look, we want you to have a decent education. We didn't have one.'

Lots of other kids don't have that edge and they slip into oblivion. Some can only work at casual labouring jobs at Point Pearce. Government departments are putting a fence around the communities and Aboriginal people can't move out. They have not got the education to move out.

Take Klynton though, he can go anywhere. He's got a certificate, that's one part of it. The other part is the work ethic code. Klynton had that. He was able to glide into the wide world, and say, 'I can go for those jobs, the same as everybody else.' He can win in an interview system and get a job in his own right.

Eight years ago Klynton wasn't in that bracket. Of Klynton's ten or so friends at school, only a couple have made it.

Desmond	20.12.68	born in Adelaide
	1969 - 70	lived on the west coast somewhere
	1971	lived in Pimba
	1972 - 73	lived in Woomera; went to kindergarten
	1974	Thebarton Primary School in Adelaide, repeated grade one mother died
	1976 - 79	school at Point McLeay; grades two to five, lived with his sister
	1980	Alberton Primary School in Adelaide, grade six and seven
	1982	Woodville High part of year eight sister went to the Riverland so auntie took custody
	1982/83	Point McLeay; year eight and nine
	1984	back to Adelaide to year ten
	1985	two months of year eleven and left school
	1986 - 90	apprenticeship program
Klynton	17.9 59	born Wallaroo Hospital, not far from Point Pearce
	1965 - 67	school at Point Pearce
	1968 - 76	Maitland Area school
	1976	left school at year eleven
	1977	training scheme to learn welding
	1978 - 84	Southern Communities Apprenticeship Training Scheme
	1981	married
	1981	first child
	1983	second child
	1986	certificates and indentures as a welder
	1986	Aboriginal Apprentice of the Year
	1986	three awards at trade school
	1987	third child born
	1988	fourth child born
	1989	wife doing pre-tertiary studies
	1990	project worker, Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program

LITERACY ISSUE: DISADVANTAGE THROUGH RACE AND POVERTY

Aboriginal people are the most educationally disadvantaged group in Australia. In 1980 the retention rate for Aboriginal people in year twelve was 7.7% and Australia's total 34.5%. In 1988 the retention rate was 22.0% and Australia's 57.6%. Great gains have been made in the last decade, but we are still way below the national goal of 65% retention by 1992.

Barriers to continuing education for Aboriginal students are:

- racial discrimination;
- social and cultural alienation;
- economic disadvantage and poorer living standards which impede successful completion of an education;
- geographical isolation for one third of Aboriginal people;
- lack of co-ordination between government services.

Strategies

- Continue financial assistance to individual students to overcome the disincentives from poverty;
- Set national and local targets to increase school retention rates to reach parity with that of all Australian students by the turn of the century;
- Involve Aboriginal communities in decision-making about providing an education that is responsive to the diverse cultural backgrounds of Aboriginal students;
- Design and implement innovative programs where ongoing support for self within a group and as an individual is critical. The national goal by the year 1992 is 65% retention of students in year twelve.

The restless years : inquiry into year twelve retention rates. 1989. Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training. Canberra: AGPS.

Reading 1D

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The general acceptance of student centred learning as one of the principles informing adult literacy practice deflects attention from the very different conceptions of it and the range of practices labelled as student centred that co-exist. I take student centred learning to mean collaborative Learning which validates students' skills, experience and potential and is directed according to students' choices and purposes. This approach enables students to take responsibility for their own learning, while tutors act as facilitators and a resource. Though crudely formulated these are, I think, the main elements that have come to comprise a student centred approach to adult basic education work.

In this article I question whether our current curriculum, teaching methods and organisation genuinely reflect students' goals and enable them to take control of their learning. I am acutely aware that students' voices are under represented here and that this article would have been of greater value had it been written with their collaboration.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY

The curriculum implications of 'starting were the student is at' were articulated in the ALBSU publication "Working Together: An Approach to Functional Literacy"[1]. The teaching style, strategies and materials demonstrated here became the dominant element in student centred approaches to literacy work. In suggesting that tutors and students identify the particular literacy practices that individual students are interested in and, then analyse the tasks and skills involved, this approach differed radically from the kind of literacy taught in schools.

A particularly powerful example offered in the book illustrates the development of literacy work generated by a student's involvement in community action (a tenants campaign), shaped by the literacy demands of the campaign and used immediately in a practical context Such an approach was radical in emphasising aspects of literacy practice generally ignored by our education system. Brian Street (1984)[2] suggests that in j accepting the proposition that there are many literacies, practitioners made implicit commitment to work with students to analyse the social and political contexts in which literacy has relevance. This became part of the process of identifying purposes and negotiating a curriculum whereby students could develop the skills and knowledge they need. Issues of language culture, class and power became legitimate areas of study in an approach which saw literacy practices as being socially situated.

This potential has not often been realised and a more narrowly conceived model of functional literacy has evolved in response to the practical purposes expressed by students. The acquisition of functional skills has clear advantages for the individual but is less straightforward than we have come to believe. I find this to be the case as soon as students move from limited aims, writing a cheque, to more complex ones such as getting a job or a better job.

Too often functional approaches have the feel of socialising students into a set of literacy practices that are either too remote from or contradicted by their life experiences. I would suggest that this is because we have largely ignored the socio-cultural context in which functional literacy learning takes place and, most importantly, our place in this context. We need to develop ways of working that reveal when different frames of reference are being used by students and tutors and to gain a clearer understanding of what is lost when we interpret students' concerns/purposes in terms of our own frames of reference, without checking that these understandings coincide.

Practitioners are beginning to explore the implications of saying that "a student and, perhaps, more powerfully a group of students, whose life understandings have been formed in a subordinate class, race or gender will know different things and the same things differently" (Gardener 1985)[3] Such a perspective is also being developed by research work which asks the question. what does literacy mean as a set of social practices for particular groups in particular contexts? This work is just beginning and, as yet, the answers are unclear. I see it as offering ways of problematising the literacy practices we offer students and examining together the relevance, power and meaning these practices have. It is important that practitioners are involved in posing the questions and that students are included in this exploration of the ideas and assumptions that underlie functional areas of a literacy curriculum. Indeed, such discussions would constitute an important element in the negotiation of experience and knowledge that would generate a genuinely student centred curriculum.

NAMING THE WORLD

Functional uses of literacy are, perhaps, the easiest to articulate. In the right circumstances, and if we have time to listen, students express other aspirations. Here are two student voices.

> *Carol:* "There's so much I've missed and I think there's so much to find out and when I read it will just be a bonus to carry on. To find out what's really going on, what there is about in the world, and what there was . . ."
>
> *Jackie:* "I'd like to write for the people that aren't educated, but trying to get it across to them the pains and barriers that can be crossed if they only venture out." The learning experience and sense of achievement she would like to share is that "You can play about. You can dip your hand in the jar and there's lots of sweets - pick what you want." (Gardener 1985)[4].

My concern is that the literacy programmes on offer fail to respond adequately to the motivations that students such as these express and seriously underestimate the breadth of students intellectual interests. No doubt this is partly due to under-resourcing which means that we are only able to partially meet the 'need' expressed I would argue that it is also a failure of curriculum development: a failure stemming from our reluctance to engage in a vigorous and sustained debate about both what literacy is and the purposes of literacy provision. The change of labels from 'literacy' to 'basic' has done nothing to stimulate this discussion, to clarify ideas of what might constitute a curriculum; or to describe the range of activities to be found in 'basic' education groups. Furthermore, attention to curriculum matters has been deflected by our emphasis on the personal, our concern to tailor what we offer to each person's needs, which obscures the importance of relating one student's experience to that of others.

The ad hoc teaching practices that we currently employ (what can I do on Tuesday?) exclude students from decision making and inhibit their development of a sense of continuity and structure.

They prevent us from responding in a coherent way to the desire for personal development and general education articulated by students such as Carol and Jackie. They result in teaching and learning that is under-informed and unable to offer students a repertoire of approaches to materials (discussion, personal experience, inquiry, analysis). They result in intelligent and imaginative materials being developed in isolation but rarely shared, evaluated and adapted by other groups for their purposes. I think this is true not only of unpublished learning resources but also of the growing body of valuable curriculum materials that has been published recently (Mace 1980[5], Gardener 1985[4], Gatehouse 1985[6]) but is not widely used.

Opportunities to share and explore practice are rare. A range of in-service training is needed so that practitioners are able to exchange theoretical and practical understandings and to share ideas, materials, successes and failures. We need to consider how we can include students in this process as the most exciting curriculum material has been developed by practitioners working in collaboration with students. Joint tutor/student workshops, participatory research-through-practice, the appointment of development workers are some of the ways this could happen.

WHO'S IN CONTROL?

Robert Merry, a student researcher who has visited and experienced a lot of Adult Basic Education' observes[7]:

> ...The tutor starts them off and gets the person rolling along the learning process. As time goes on, if you ask the person learning what way or method s/he is using to learn, the answer you will get it, 'I go to a group and we do some reading out loud, some writing and some spelling' Sometimes you do not even get as much as that for an answer. The answer to this question is not just peculiar to people who have just recently started to go to the centre or scheme. It does not matter how long the person has been going, you will still get the same answer. It is too much of one person knowing what the other would like to know and keeping it that way. (Gardener 1985)[1]

We stress the need to share life skills and experiences but have, it seems, failed to recognise as equally important for independence the need to make our methodologies available to students. Robert argues that students need access to the skills involved in Learning and explanations of their purposes. He speculates that many tutors may not do this because they themselves do not fully understand what they are doing. My own recent experience suggests that this may well be so. 'Why do we work in the ways that we do? Should there be more structure to our teaching? How do we know that language experience approaches are valuable?' are just some of the questions fielded by a group of experienced practitioners (of which I was one) during a workshop session at the Research and Practice in Adult Literacy seminar held in London in February 198S9 At present I know of no comprehensive body of expertise on language and learning which is accessible to students and tutors. However, recent studies and innovative curriculum development projects point to ways in which we might begin to explore this territory with students.

The Independent Learning Project at Morley College[7] based its work on the proposition that 'learning about learning' is a crucial activity in which adult basic education students need to engage. The project workers considered how a person could take control of his or her own learning. They developed a training syllabus to facilitate learning for autonomy, and then explored contexts in which this would be encouraged. Interestingly, their experience shows that this is a group activity happening best through discussion and comparison of experience (rather than by the teaching of a body of 'knowledge' about learning). The project's materials are a flexible resource which could be widely used to stimulate thought and discussion about what Learning is; setting goals and assessing progress; sharing knowledge about the strategies and techniques we use; and exploring areas which may be unfamiliar to many tutors and students.

We have been committed to the kind of writing and active reading that validates the student's life and experience and places the emphasis on a belief that everyone has 'something to say' This work is based on experience and intuitions about the value of talk as a means of learning and as part of the writing process; the connections and differences between spoken and written language; the process of writing; our approaches to grammar. There have been few opportunities to clarify our own thinking. Consequently we have not been able to make our assumptions explicit, to share them with students or to elicit students' understandings of these relationships and processes. Until we do this it is difficult to envisage how we can respond adequately to students' perceptions that there are things about language and how it works that they need to know but that we are unwilling to share.

RESEARCH

There is a growing awareness of the need to reflect on the adult literacy work that goes on, to explore the intuitive judgements and assumptions on which it is based and to investigate how it is experienced by students. This can only happen if there is a, commitment to allocating adequate resources to research in adult basic education and a search for appropriate research methodologies. The Research and Practice in Adult Literacy seminars held during the past two years have begun to identify the sort of research-through-practice that we could usefully engage in. Such research is participatory in that students and tutors help to shape the research which reflects their demands, not just the demands of the professional (researcher or administrator). It is collaborative. Students and tutors research their experience together.

It places students' and tutors' experiences and perceptions of literacy and learning at the centre of the investigation and is often also an experiment in curriculum development. Research reports are rarely seen by tutors and probably never by students. Participatory research is being published in forms that are accessible to students and tutors and can be used to inform their discussions about learning (Lawrence 1986[8], ALBSU (Merry) 1984[7]). Research-through-practice illustrates that research need not be remote and academic but can be a valuable classroom based and student centred activity enabling those involved in adult literacy to reflect upon it and influence its development. Making the argument for resources for qualitative research is, for me, part of a commitment to making student centred learning both more possible and more productive.

A STUDENT-CENTRED SERVICE

'If you work all day, in the evenings you want some time for yourself - or to talk to the children. Anyway after I leave work I wouldn't be able to take anything in. You're not just leaving work, you've got a home to run as well and a family. So courses should be held in your work time, not when you're too tired to learn. All these things that we have opportunities for we actually pay for too, so we shouldn't be feeling guilty about it. It should be part of our lives naturally.' (Mace 1985[11]).

It is impossible to write about student-centred learning solely in the context of the classroom because styles of courses, classes and resources are determined by wider institutional, financial and political constraints beyond the immediate control of tutors and students. What can we say from experience are the requirements for a student centred service in which learning could be 'part of our lives naturally'? We need to create a flexible range of learning opportunities: full-time provision, paid educational leave, workplace classes, tutor led groups, student circles, tutorials, residential courses - and more. Opportunities that are necessary as complementary not alternative options. At present the part-time, fragmentary and under-resourced nature of adult basic education provision affords students few choices and fails to provide the possibilities for personal development and general education that, whenever we ask, they clearly state they need.

Despite the ALBSU 'Good Practice' Document's support for wider student participation I would guess that its possibilities are rarely explored. I would like to examine briefly some of the areas in which students' experience would contribute to the development of a service which reflects their outlook and purposes more accurately than at present.

> *Training*: 'I've been working with a volunteer tutor for three years. I've probably got far more experience than any of the staff here of working with a volunteer. Staff don't work with individual students or volunteers over a long period of time because it's not practical. I do it every week so in a way I've become an expert in my own right.' (ALBSU 1985[10]).

Tutors need the first-hand experience that student involvement in training can provide. The equality of relationship that student centred learning requires is more likely to develop if tutors meet students in this active training role. Training is an educative process for the trainers encouraging students to evaluate their own learning and to analyse the contexts, methods and materials that they have encountered. The insights gained through training enable them to set their own Learning goals with greater confidence and skill.

Involvement in training enables students to challenge stereotypes that new tutors often have when they first contact a scheme. Participation in *publicity* gives students the opportunity to determine the messages and images that are transmitted to the public and potential students. In London a students' group scripted and recorded a literacy announcement that was broadcast on Capital Radio. The group spoke not only of the personal problems that their literacy difficulties caused but also clearly located those difficulties in the unequal educational opportunities available in a class society. It was a powerful and confident message that had a completely different tone to orthodox public service announcements.

Many adult basic education centres would acknowledge that as users of a student centred service students should participate in its day-to-day *management*, recruiting and appointing staff, evaluating provision, allocating resources and in decisions concerning the development of provision. However, it is clear that conventional management structures do not enable students to take an effective role in decision making and that we have a long way to go in evolving democratic structures that reflect and are responsive to students' concerns. Experiments to foster greater participation at the Lee Centre led to the conclusion that: 'to convene a committee which has too large a brief, which meets only for two hours a month, with the idea of members sharing the decisions that have to be made to run the Centre on a day-to-day basis, is an inadequate structure for those members to be able to take an active part in a place like this.' (Mace 1986[11])

It seems we must challenge the literacy practices of the institutions of which we are a part and explore alternative styles of management that are acceptable to users. The NSA and the NFVLS have organised conferences to share experience, to debate the issues and to explore alternatives. If student participation is to develop as an important facet of student-centred learning opportunities such as these need to be more widely available in the statutory as well as the voluntary sector.

FINALLY

Uneasy discussions with colleagues and a growing awareness of the understandings emerging through innovative practice and recent research or work in progress led me to recognise and reassess the limited notion of student centred learning that I have been employing while 'getting on with the job' in an increasingly circumscribed environment. I find the continuing willingness of practitioners to pose questions, to experiment and to co-operate to extend their understandings, stimulating and reassuring. What remains in doubt is the willingness to commit the resources necessary to develop the sort of effective student centred service this research and practice demonstrates that students require.

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Reading 2A

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Chapter 6

Discourses and Literacies: Two Theorems

Literacy Studies

In Chapter 3, I argued that, over the last few years, a new field of study has emerged around the notion of *literacy*, a field dedicated to integrating approaches to language and cognition from a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropology, sociology, political theory and education. While literacy has been a focus of research for a long time, what is new here is the emergence of a set of assumptions and methodologies that can constitute both a core curriculum for all future teachers and educators and a 'discipline' to serve as the heart of a renewed, socioculturally situated 'educational studies'. Since this emerging field has no name, I will simply call it, as I did in Chapter 3, the new 'literacy studies'.[1]

In this chapter I develop the foundations of a theory of literacy, a theory which implies a wider theory of language and society. The groundwork for this wider theory of language and society has been set by Chapters 4 and 5. It is my hope that my approach is not completely novel, but shares a number of core assumptions with the body of work I have identified as literacy studies. My goal is to introduce a way of talking and thinking about literacy which captures a number of (I believe) valid insights, leads to important consequences, and marshalls an empirical base for (what I hope is) a consistent theory of literacy. As we will see, the notion of 'literacy' is far broader, and far more significant, than one typically thinks, or than older research indicated.

Given the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3, it is clear — if somewhat paradoxical — that the focus of literacy studies cannot be, and ought not to be, on *language*, or even *literacy* itself as traditionally construed. Rather, the focus must be on *social practices*. This claim, which has, I argue, a number of socially important and cognitively interesting consequences, is the center of my theory of literacy, and it will be the central goal of this chapter to defend it. I will defend it by attempting to define the notion of 'literacy' and then showing that any authentic definition quickly leads us away from reading and writing (literacy as traditionally construed), and even away from language, and towards social relationships and social practices.

Traditional approaches to literacy have often been caught up in the master myth we discussed in Chapter 4 (what we called there 'the commodity myth') when we looked at different contextualizations of the concepts of *time*, *work* and *money*. There we saw that our culture often thinks about time, work and money apart from their context in human experience, human relationships and social activities, and instead treats them as abstract entities intertranslatable in terms of each other within an abstract system: work for money = work *time* = time is money = (it takes) money (to) make money. Time as the flow of human experience and work as daily human effort are quantified and equated through the concept of 'money' as 'wages' (so much money for so much work time) and 'profit' (the money made beyond the wages paid), and thence 'money' is seen, not as something traded by people for useful goods, but rather as a self-generating source of simply more of itself ('capital'). We finally reach, like magic, an entity ('capital', a 'technical term', not an 'everyday' term) which appears to have nothing to do with messy, sweaty people or conflictual relationships between people (the actual worker, the actual boss, the actual owner), but only with 'systems' and 'institutions' ('interest', 'prices', 'investments', 'banks', 'the market', 'the economy'). Economic relations become relations between abstract things like commodities, goods, wages and prices, profit and interest, concealing relations of exchange among people.

Many discussions of 'literacy' are couched in terms of this same master myth: 'functional literacy' = skills necessary to function in 'today's job market' = 'market economy' = 'the market' = 'the economy'. Literacy is measured out and quantified, like time, work and money. We get 'reading levels', 'graded texts', 'levels of literacy skills', 'levels of literacy', 'amounts of literacy and illiteracy', 'rates of literacy'; we 'match' skills with jobs, and 'match' jobs with 'economic needs' (ironically an abstract system has 'needs', does it also have desires?).

Literacy becomes itself intertranslatable with time, work and money, part of 'the economy', where the economy is not a set of relationships between people, but rather a set of relationships between inanimate abstract entities like 'markets', 'investments', 'profit', 'wages', 'capital', 'the gross national product', 'rates of return', 'the growth rate' (and what's growing in the 'growth' rate is not a living thing, but a numerical figure that quantifies abstract entities like money, profit and investment of 'capital').[2]

Literacy becomes a commodity that can be measured, and thence bought and sold. The often repeated claim that a '40 per cent rate of adult literacy is a threshold for economic development' or 'economic take off' (for 'developing countries', where people are often 'de-developing' their own control over their own land and resources) is the epitome of this way of thinking: a certain rather precise quantity of literacy (something that cannot be measured) is necessary for the 'economy' (not people) to 'grow', 'develop', 'take off' (and often this sort of industrial take off means that many people's lives become worse, and, ironically, literacy in any humanly authentic sense of the word as a human activity is impoverished).[3]

The ways of thinking encouraged by the master myths of our culture seem natural, inevitable, and unavoidable; but they are no such thing. Plenty of people in the past and in other cultures in the present have thought otherwise.[4] In particular, I will argue that a concept like 'functional literacy', a concept which is squarely embedded in and the product of the 'commodity myth' is, in fact, conceptually incoherent, and, to the extent that we can make any real sense of it, empirically incorrect.[5]

The issue, however, is not primarily whether the way of thinking about literacy embedded in the commodity master myth is 'wrong' or not (though I think it is), it is whether *you* want to choose to think that way or not. Since we normally take our master myths for granted, we have not usually made this choice in any overt fashion. Master myths, like the commodity myth, are pervasive *social theories*, theories that are, in terms of our discussion in Chapter 1, usually *tacit* and *removed* or *deferred*. They involve us in important beliefs (claims, generalizations) about the distribution of social goods, beliefs that very often advantage some groups against others. As such, they fall squarely under what I argued in Chapter 1 was a moral obligation for thought, discussion and overt choice (see what I called there the 'second conceptual principle governing ethical human discourse'). 'Literacy' is what I called in the first chapter a 'socially contested term', and as such, debate about literacy, while it can be more or less empirically persuasive, ultimately comes down to moral choices about what theories one wants to hold, based on the sort of social worlds these theories underwrite in the present or make possible for the future.

Grammar, Use and Discourse

What does 'literacy' mean? To define 'literacy' adequately, we must first discuss a few other concepts which are commonly misconstrued. One of these is 'language'. 'Language' can be a misleading term: we saw in Chapter 4 that form and meaning have somewhat separate lives of their own in language. The term 'language' is often used ambiguously for either the *grammar* (form, pattern, structure) of the language or for the *meanings* it conveys and the *communicative functions* it performs.

It is a truism in the literature now, but one we nonetheless must hold constantly in mind, that a person can know the *grammar* of a language and still not know how to *use* that language.[6] What is important in communication is not speaking *grammatically*, but saying the 'right' thing at the 'right' time and in the 'right' place. If I enter my neighborhood bar and say to my tattooed drinking buddy, as I sit down, 'May I have a match please?', my grammar is perfect, but what I have said is wrong nonetheless. The situation requires something more like, 'Gotta match?'

A language classroom that taught grammar perfectly would ensure that students knew how messages were encoded in the language, but they would still not know when and where to use which encodings. As a result, their knowledge would be useless. Knowing how to say, 'May I have match, please?', but not when and where to say it, is tantamount to having a tool and failing to know what in the world it is used for. It must always be remembered that in acquiring a language or in teaching one, what is important is how to put the grammar to *use*.

Research on second language acquisition both inside and outside classroom settings indicates that some speakers can have quite poor grammar and function in communication and socialization quite well, while others can have much better grammar and still function more poorly.[7] Here once again, as in our discussion of language form and language meaning in Chapter 2, we see a disassociation between form (grammar) and function (meaning, communication) in language; we see once again that they have somewhat separate lives. The importance of this disassociation is unfortunately ignored in almost all curricular materials for language or literacy instruction and in almost all theories of second language acquisition.

It is less often remarked that a person could be able to *use* a language perfectly and *still* not make sense (paradoxically put: a person can speak the language grammatically, can use the language appropriately, and still get it 'wrong'). This is so because what is important is not just *how* you say it (how you *use* the grammar, that is, how you formulate a message given the context it is said in), but what *you are* and *do* when you say it.[8]

If I enter my neighborhood bar and say to my drinking buddy, as I sit down, 'Gotta match?', or 'Gime a match, wouldya?', while placing a napkin on the bar stool to avoid getting my newly pressed designer jeans dirty, I have said the right thing, but my 'saying–doing' combination is, nonetheless, all wrong. My words, however appropriately formulated for the situation, do not 'fit' with my actions, and, in the case of socially situated language, 'fit' between words and actions is all important.

In fact, the matter goes further than this; it is not just language and action which must 'fit' together appropriately. In socially situated language use, one must simultaneously *say* the 'right' thing, *do* the 'right' thing, and in the saying and doing express the 'right' *beliefs, values, and attitudes*. That is, language is always spoken (and written, for that matter) out of a particular *social identity* (or *social role*), an identity that is a composite of words, actions and (implied) beliefs, values and attitudes. 'I want my Mommy' is perfectly grammatical and has many perfectly good uses, but it simply can't be said while one is imitating Humphrey Bogart, it just isn't 'in character', and language must always be 'in character'. Being 'in character' has more to it than just what words you say; it's what you say, how you say it, what you are doing while you say it, and what attitudes, values and beliefs you (appear to) have while talking and acting. The point is that language does not just go with certain (sorts of appropriate) actions, but it goes with certain *types of people*, where all of us can, by playing various social roles, be different types of people in different contexts (though not all conceivable types of people).

Let me give a concrete example of the way in which language must not only have the right grammar and be used (or formulated) appropriately, but must also express the right values, beliefs and attitudes. In a paper arguing the importance of using language appropriately, F. Niyi Akinnaso and Cheryl Seabrook Ajirotutu present 'simulated job interviews' (practice sessions) from two black welfare mothers in a United States job training program.[9] I reprint these two interviews in Figure 6.1 below. Though the interviews are from two different women, Akinnaso and Ajirotutu present these two interviews as 'before and after' cases. That is, the first one is presented as an example of how *not* to carry out an interview, and the second is presented as the *correct* way to do it, the successful result of having been properly trained in the job training program.

The first woman is simply using the wrong grammar (the wrong 'dialect') for this type of (middle class) interview. It is a perfectly good grammar (dialect), it just won't get you this type of job in this type of society.[10] In our society, you are expected to use 'standard' English for most job interviews, so this woman's grammar doesn't 'fit' the context.

The second woman, the 'success case', has no real problem with her grammar (remember this is *speech*, not *writing*). Her grammar is, for the most part, perfectly normal 'standard' English. Nor is there any real problem with the *use* to which she puts that grammar; all her sentences are formulated appropriately for the time, place and occasion in which she is speaking (except the 'say' in line 6, which sounds like she is 'estimating' or 'imagining', rather than 'reporting'). However, she is still getting it 'wrong' and is not, in fact, a 'success'. This is so because she is, in the act of using the 'right' grammar in the 'right' way, nonetheless expressing (implying) the *wrong values*.

Figure 6.1: Two Simulated Job Interviews

Job interview texts from F. Niyi Akinnaso and Cheryl Seabrook Ajirotutu, 'Performance and ethnic style in job interviews', in John J. Gumperz (ed.) *Language and Social Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 119–144. Material between two slashes represents one 'tone group' (a set of words said with one unitary intonational contour), and dots represent pauses, with the greater number of dots equally a longer pause.

Job Interview Text 1

Q: Have you had any previous job experience that would demonstrate that you've shown initiative or been able to work independently?

1 Well / . . . yes when I / . . . OK / . . . there's this Walgreen's Agency /
2 I worked as a microfilm operator / OK /
3 And it was a snow storm /
4 OK / and it was usually six people / workin' in a group /
5 uhum / and only me and this other girl showed up /
6 and we had quite a lot of work to do /
7 and so the man / he asked us could we / you know / do we / . . . do we thinks we could finish this work /
8 so me 'n' this girl / you know / we finished it all /

Job Interview Text 2

Q: One more question was that ah, this kind of work frequently involves using your own initiative and showing sort of the ability to make independent judgment. Do you have any . . . can you tell me about any previous experience which you think directly show . . demonstrates that you have these qualities?

1 Why / . . well / as far as being capable of handling an office /
2 say if I'm left on my own /
3 I feel I'm capable /
4 I had a situation where one of my employers that I've been /
5 ah previously worked for /
6 had to go on / a . . / a trip for say / ah three weeks and /
7 he was / . . . I was left alone to . . / handle the office and run it /
8 And at that time / ah I didn't really have what you would say / a lot of experience /
9 But I had enough experience to / . . deal with any situations that came up while he was gone /
10 and those that I couldn't / handle at the time /
11 if there was someone who had more experience than myself /
12 I asked questions / to find out / what procedure I would use /
13 If something came up / and if I didn't know / who to really go to /
14 I would jot it down / or write it down / on a piece of paper /
15 so that I wouldn't forget that . . /
16 if anyone that / was more qualified than myself /
17 I could ask them about it /
18 and how I would go about solving it /
19 So I feel I'm capable of handling just about any situation /
20 whether it's on my own / or under supervision

She opens by saying that she is capable of handling an office on her own. She goes on to say that though she did not have a lot of experience, she had enough experience to deal with 'any situations that came up' while her boss was away. But then she immediately (in line 10) brings up 'those that I couldn't handle', which seems to contradict, and certainly does mitigate, her claim that she could handle anything that came up. She now (in lines 11 and 12) elaborates on her inexperience and lack of knowledge by saying that she asked questions of those with more experience than herself (why weren't they left in charge?). Any chance we could construe this last point as, at least, 'a responsible humility' is destroyed as she goes on (in lines 13–18) to mention not just things she doesn't know how to handle, but things she doesn't even know who to ask about (and in line 16 once again mentions people more qualified than herself). The whole second part of her answer (after line 9) involves her search for people more knowledgable than herself whose superior knowledge can supplement her lack of knowledge. In fact, for her, 'responsibility', 'initiative', and 'independent judgment' amount to deferring to 'other people's' knowledge. Her response closes (in lines 19 and 20), as is fully appropriate to such interview talk, with a return to her original point: 'So I feel I'm capable of handling just about any situation, whether it's on my own, or under supervision.' But this is contradicted by the very attitudes and values she has just allowed us to infer that she holds. She seems to view being left in charge as just another form of supervision, namely, supervision by 'other people's' knowledge and expertise.

Though this woman starts and finishes in an appropriate fashion, she fails in the heart of the narrative to characterize her own expertise in the overly optimistic form called for by such interviews.[11] Using this response as an example of 'successful training' is only possible because the authors, aware that language is more than grammar (namely, 'use'), are unaware that communication is more than language use.

The moral of the above discussion is that at any moment we are using language we must say or write the right thing in the right way while playing the right social role and (appearing) to hold the right values, beliefs and attitudes. What is important is not language, and surely not grammar, but *saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations*. These combinations I will refer to as 'Discourses', with a capital 'D' ('discourse' with a little 'd', I will use for connected stretches of language that make sense, like conversations, stories, reports, arguments, essays; 'discourse' is part of 'Discourse' — 'Discourse' with a big 'D' is always more than just language). Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes.

A Discourse is a sort of 'identity kit' which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize. Imagine what an identity kit to play the role of Sherlock Holmes would involve: certain clothes, certain ways of using language (oral language and print), certain attitudes and beliefs, allegiance to a certain life style, and certain ways of interacting with others. We can call all these factors together, as they are integrated around the identity of 'Sherlock Holmes, Master Detective' the 'Sherlock Holmes Discourse'. This example also makes clear that 'Discourse', as I am using the term, does not involve just talk or just language.

Another way to look at Discourses is that they are always ways of displaying (through words, actions, values and beliefs) *membership* in a particular social group or social network (people who associate with each other around a common set of interests, goals and activities). Being 'trained' as a linguist meant that I learned to speak, think and act like a linguist, and to recognize others when they do so (not just that I learned lots of facts about language and linguistics). So 'being a linguist' is one of the Discourses I have mastered.

Now, matters are not that simple: the larger Discourse of linguistics contains many sub-Discourses, different socially accepted ways of being a linguist. But the master Discourse is not just the sum of its parts; it is something over and above them. Every act of speaking, writing and behaving a linguist does as a linguist is meaningful only against the background of the whole social institution of linguistics, and that institution is made up of concrete things like people, books and buildings; abstract things like bodies of knowledge, values, norms and beliefs; mixtures of concrete and abstract things like universities, journals and publishers; as well as a shared history and shared stories.

Other examples of Discourses include: (enacting) being an American or a Russian, a man or a woman, a member of a certain socioeconomic class, a factory worker or a boardroom executive, a doctor or a hospital patient, a teacher, an administrator, or a student, a student of physics or a student of literature, a member of a sewing circle, a club, a street gang, a lunchtime social gathering, or a regular at a local bar. Discourses are always embedded in a medley of social institutions, and often involve various 'props' like books and magazines of various sorts, laboratories, classrooms, buildings of various sorts, various technologies, and a myriad of other objects from sewing needles (for sewing circles) through birds (for bird watchers) to basketball courts and basketballs (for basketball players). This latter point is important because many people mistake literacy for its 'props' and 'stage settings' (books, classrooms, training centers).

Yet another way to look at Discourses is as 'clubs' with (tacit) rules about who is a member and who is not, and (tacit) rules about how members ought to behave (if they wish to continue being accepted as members). Being a member of a family, a peer group, a community group or church, a drinking group, a classroom, a profession, a research team, an ethnic group, a sub-culture or a culture requires 'rites of passage' to enter the group, the maintenance of certain behaviors (ways of talking, valuing, thinking) to continue to be accepted as an 'insider', and continued 'tests' of membership applied by others.

Discourses

The term 'discourse' is used in many different ways in the literature in linguistics and literacy, so it is important to remember that I mean by 'Discourse' (with a capital 'D') what I have just said. I am giving a technical meaning to an old term which, unfortunately, already has a variety of other meanings.[12] I use the word as a *count* term ('a Discourse', 'Discourses', 'many Discourses'), not as a *mass* term ('Discourse', 'much Discourse'). To sum up, by 'a Discourse' I mean:

> A *Discourse* is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network', or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role'.

One can make various important points about Discourses, none of which, for some reason, is very popular with Americans, though they seem to be commonplace in European social theory:[13]

1 Discourses are inherently 'ideological' in the sense in which I defined that term in Chapter 1. They crucially involve a set of values and viewpoints about the relationships between people and the distribution of social goods (at the very least about who is an insider and who isn't, but often many others as well). One must speak and act, and at least appear to think and feel, in terms of these values and viewpoints while being in the Discourse, otherwise one doesn't count as being in it.

2 Discourses are resistant to internal criticism and self-scrutiny since uttering viewpoints that seriously undermine them defines one as being outside them. The Discourse itself defines what counts as acceptable criticism. Of course, one can criticize a particular Discourse from the viewpoint of another one (e.g. psychology criticizing linguistics). But what one cannot do is stand outside all Discourses and criticize any one or all of them. Criticism must always be lodged from some set of assumed values, attitudes, beliefs and ways of talking/writing and, thus, from within some Discourse.

3 Discourse-defined positions from which to speak and behave are not, however, just defined internal to a Discourse, but also as standpoints taken up by the Discourse in its relation to other, ultimately opposing, Discourses. The Discourse of managers in an industry is partly defined as a set of views, norms and standpoints defined by their opposition to analogous points in the Discourse of workers.[14] The Discourse we identify with being a feminist is radically changed if all male Discourses disappear. The Discourse of a regular drinking group at a bar is partly defined by its points of opposition to a variety of other viewpoints (non-drinkers, people who dislike bars as places of meeting people, 'Yuppies').

4 Any Discourse concerns itself with certain objects and puts forward certain concepts, viewpoints and values at the expense of others. In doing so, it will *marginalize* viewpoints and values central to other Discourses.[15] In fact, a Discourse can call for one to accept values in conflict with other Discourses of which one is also a member. For example, the Discourse used in literature departments used to marginalize popular literature and women's writings (though times are changing in this regard). Further, women readers of Hemingway, for instance, when acting as 'acceptable readers' by the standards of the Discourse of traditional literary criticism might find themselves complicit with values which conflict with those of various other Discourses they belong to as a woman (for example, various feminist Discourses).[16]

5 Finally, Discourses are intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society (which is why they are always and everywhere ideological, see point 1). Control over certain Discourses can lead to the acquisition of social goods (money, power, status) in a society (for example, the Discourse of successful 'mainstream', 'middle-class' interviewing, which neither of the women we studied above had mastered). These Discourses empower those groups who have the least conflicts with

> their other Discourses when they use them. For example, many academic, legalistic and bureaucratic discourses in our society contain a moral sub-Discourse that sees 'right' as what is derivable from general abstract principles. This can conflict to a degree with a Discourse about morality, which appears to be more often associated with women than men, in terms of which 'wrong' is seen as the disruption of social networks, and 'right' as the repair of those networks.[17] Or, to take another example, the Discourse of traditional literary criticism used to be a standard route to success as a professor of literature. Since it conflicted less with the other Discourses of white, middle-class men than it did with those of women, men were empowered by it. Women were not, as they were often at cross-purposes when engaging in it.

Let us call Discourses that lead to social goods in a society 'dominant Discourses', and let us refer to those groups that have the fewest conflicts when using them as 'dominant groups'. These are both matters of degree and change to a certain extent in different contexts.

All Discourses are the products of history, whether these be Discourses connected with academic disciplines like physics or history, or ones connected with academic practices like 'essayist' writing-talking-and-thinking, or other school-based practices, or ones connected with businesses, government agencies, or other social institutions, or with Discourses embedded in local community identities such as 'Afro-American', 'Chicano', 'Yuppie' or innumerable others.

It is sometimes helpful to say that it is not individuals who speak and act, but rather that historically and socially defined Discourses speak to each other through individuals.[18] The individual instantiates, gives body to, a Discourse every time he or she acts or speaks, and thus carries it, and ultimately changes it, through time. Americans tend to be very focused on the individual, and thus often miss the fact that the individual is simply the meeting point of many, sometimes conflicting, socially and historically defined Discourses.

What counts as an 'individual' is differentially defined in different Discourses within a single society and across different cultures. The various Discourses which *constitute* each of us as persons (or subjects) are changing and often are not fully consistent with each other; there is often conflict and tension between the values, beliefs, attitudes, interactional styles, uses of language and ways of being in the world which two or more Discourses represent. There is no real sense in which we humans are consistent or well integrated creatures from a cognitive or social viewpoint, though most Discourses assume that we are (and thus we do too, while we are in them). The only problem with this view of Discourses is that we should not let it obscure the equally important point that human beings can (to a certain extent) *choose* which Discourses to be in at which times (though there is, of course, a price for these, like all other choices). And these choices are very often moral choices (see Chapter 1).

Acquisition and Learning

The crucial question is: how do people come by the Discourses they are members of? Here it is necessary, before answering the question, to make an important distinction, a distinction that does not exist in non-technical parlance, but one which is important to a linguist: a distinction between 'acquisition' and 'learning'.[19]

> *Acquisition* is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching. It happens in natural settings which are meaningful and functional in the sense that acquirers know that they need to acquire the thing they are exposed to in order to function and they in fact want to so function. This is how most people come to control their first language.
>
> *Learning* is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection. This teaching or reflection involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into its analytic parts. It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter.

Much of what we come by in life, after our initial enculturation, involves a mixture of acquisition and learning. However, the balance between the two can be quite different in different cases and different at different stages in the developmental process. For instance, I initially learned to drive a car by instruction, but thereafter acquired, rather than learned, most of what I know.

Some cultures highly value acquisition and so tend simply to expose children to adults modeling some activity; eventually the child picks it up, picks it up as a gestalt, rather than as a series of analytic bits. Other cultural groups highly value teaching and thus break down what is to be mastered into sequential steps and analytic parts and engage in explicit explanation.

There is an up side and a down side to both acquisition and learning that can be expressed as follows: we are better at performing what we acquire, but we consciously know more about what we have learned. For most of us, playing a musical instrument, or dancing, or using a second language are skills we attained by some mixture of acquisition and learning. But it is a safe bet that, over the same amount of time, people are better at (performing) these activities if acquisition predominated during that time.

The point can be made using second language as the example: most people aren't very good at attaining a second language in any very functional way through formal instruction in a classroom. That's why teaching grammar is not a very good way of getting people to control a language.[20] However, people who have acquired a second language in a natural setting don't thereby make good linguists, and some good linguists can't speak the languages they learned in a classroom. What is said here about second languages is true, I believe, of all Discourses: acquisition is good for performance, learning is good for meta-level knowledge. Acquisition and learning are differential sources of power: acquirers usually beat learners at performance, learners usually beat acquirers at talking about it, that is, at explication, explanation, analysis and criticism.

What has been argued, controversially, to be true in the case of second language development is, I would argue, much less controversially true of Discourses: Discourses are mastered through *acquisition*, not *learning*. That is, Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction (even less so than languages, and hardly anyone ever fluently acquired a second language sitting in a classroom), but by enculturation ('apprenticeship') into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse. This is how we all acquired our native language and our home-based Discourse. It is how we acquire all later, more public oriented Discourses. If you have no access to the social practice, you don't get in the Discourse, you don't have it.[21]

As a Discourse is being mastered (or after it has) by acquisition, then learning can facilitate 'meta-knowledge', but learning can facilitate nothing unless the acquisition process has already begun. You cannot overtly teach anyone a Discourse, in a classroom or anywhere else. This is not to say that acquisition cannot go on in a classroom, but only that if it does, this isn't because of overt 'teaching', but because of a process of 'apprenticeship' and social practice. Acquisition must (at least, partially) precede learning; apprenticeship must precede 'teaching' (in the normal sense of the word 'teaching'). Classrooms that do not properly balance acquisition and learning, and realize which is which, and which student has acquired what, simply privilege those students who have begun the acquisition process at home, engaging these students in a teaching/learning process, while the others simply 'fail'.

It is very important to realize that the English language often leads us to confuse terms for products/props/content and terms for Discourses. In an academic discipline like linguistics, you can overtly teach someone (the content knowledge of the discipline of) *linguistics*, which is a body of facts and theories; however, while knowledge of some significant part of these facts and theories is necessary to being a linguist, you cannot overtly teach anyone *to be (to behave like) a linguist*, which is a Discourse — you can just let them practise being a linguist (apprentice them) with people who are already in the Discourse. A person could know a great deal about linguistics and still not be (accepted as) a linguist (not able to signal membership in the 'club' by the right type of talk, writing, values, attitudes and behaviors). 'Autodidacts' are precisely people who, while often extremely knowledgable, trained themselves and thus were trained outside a process of group practice and socialization. They are almost never accepted as 'insiders', 'members of the club (profession, group)'. Our Western focus on individualism makes us constantly forget the importance of having been 'properly socialized'.

To confuse what is in a textbook and being a linguist, to confuse what is on a printed page and being a writer, to confuse standing in a church and being a member of the church, to confuse being hired and being a member of the company ('a good old boy') is to confuse the props with the play, products with processes, appearances with 'realities'. The confusion is ever present, influencing both folk theories and academic research, and is disastrous in thinking about literacy.

Let me turn now to the proviso in the definition of learning above about 'certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection' causing the same effects as overt teaching. In my definition of learning, I am concerned with what usually or prototypically counts as 'teaching' in our culture. This involves breaking down what is to be taught into its analytic bits and getting learners to learn it in such a way that they can 'talk about', 'describe', 'explain' it. That is, the learner is meant to have 'meta-knowledge' about what is learned and to be able to engage in 'meta-talk' about it (what often goes under the name of 'critical thinking'). We even teach things like driving this way. But not all cultures engage in this sort of teaching, and not all of them use the concept 'teaching' in this way; nor, indeed, do all instances of what is sometimes called 'teaching' in our own culture fit this characterization.

In many cultures where there is no such overt analytical teaching, some people still gain a good deal of 'meta-knowledge' about what they know and do. This appears to come about because they have had certain experiences which have caused them to think about a particular Discourse in a reflective and critical way.[22] When we have really mastered anything (e.g., a Discourse), we have little or no conscious awareness of it (indeed, like dancing, Discourses wouldn't work if people were consciously aware of what they were doing while doing it). However, when we come across a situation where we are unable to accommodate or adapt, we become consciously aware of what we are trying to do, or are being called upon to do.[23] While such an experience can happen to anyone, they are common among people who are somewhat 'marginal' to a Discourse or culture, and such people often have insights into the workings of these Discourses or cultures that more 'mainstream' members do not. This is the advantage to being 'socially maladapted' (as long as the maladaption is not too dysfunctional, and this is not to say that there are not also disadvantages). Of course, people in our culture can have such experiences apart from classrooms (and often have them *in* classrooms when it is the classroom, school, or teacher that is causing the maladaption).

Let me give an example that works similarly, and which further illuminates the nature of learning via teaching or reflective life experiences: the case of classroom second language learning. Almost no one really acquires a second language in a classroom. However, it can happen that exposure to another language, having to translate it into and otherwise relate it to your own language, can cause you to become consciously aware of how your first language works (how it means). This 'meta-knowledge' can make one better able to manipulate one's first language. Vygotsky says that learning 'a foreign language allows the child to understand his native language as a single instantiation of a linguistic system.'[24] Ruth Finnegan, in a study of the Limba, a non-literate group in Sierra Leone, points out that the Limba have a great deal of meta-linguistic and reflective sophistication in their talk about language, sophistication of the sort that we normally think is the product of writing and formal schooling, both of which the Limba do not have. Finnegan attributes this sophistication to the Limba's multiple contacts with speakers of other languages and with those languages themselves.[25] Here we have a clue: classroom instruction (in composition, study skills, writing, critical thinking, content-based literacy) can lead to meta-knowledge, to seeing how the Discourses you already have relate to those you are attempting to acquire, and how the ones you are trying to acquire relate to self and society.

There is no doubt that many minority and lower socioeconomic students have great difficulty accommodating to, or adapting to, certain 'mainstream' Discourses, in particular, many school-based Discourses. These Discourses often conflict seriously (in values, attitudes, ways of acting, thinking, talking) with their own home and community-based Discourses.[26] Furthermore, these mainstream Discourses often incorporate attitudes and values hostile to, and even in part define themselves in opposition to, these minority students and their home and community-based Discourses. The difficulty of accommodation can certainly give rise to large problems in gaining the social goods that the society ties to mastery of mainstream Discourses, but it can also lead to reflective insight and meta-knowledge (even in the absence of equitable or successful classroom teaching). Meta-knowledge is power, because it leads to the ability to manipulate, to analyze, to resist while advancing. Such meta-knowledge can make 'maladapted' students smarter than 'adapted' ones.

Today, attention to 'process', 'content', 'meaning' as against the superficialities of 'form' and 'mechanical correctness' is a hallmark of 'liberal' 'humanist' approaches to writing instruction, and education generally. Nancy Mack, for instance, says: 'Good listeners pay attention to the meaning of an utterance and not its correctness — unless, of course, there is some ideological benefit to be gained by stressing the surface features of the language.'[27] As far as acquisition goes there is some sense to this. Unfortunately, however, many middle-class mainstream status-giving Discourses often *do* stress surface features of the language. Why? Precisely because such surface features are the best test as to whether one was apprenticed in the 'right' place, at the 'right' time, with the 'right' people. Such surface features are exactly the parts of Discourses most impervious to overt instruction and are only fully mastered (acquired) when everything else in the Discourse is mastered. Since these Discourses are used as 'gates' to ensure that the 'right' people get to the 'right' places in our society, such surface features are ideal. A person who writes in a petition or office memo: 'If you cancel the show, all the performers would have did all that hard work for nothing' has signaled that he or she isn't the 'right sort of person' (who was not fully acculturated to the Discourse that supports this identity), and that signal stays meaningful long after the content of the memo is forgotten, or even when the content was of no interest in the first place.

One can certainly encourage students simply to 'resist' such 'superficial features of language'. Indeed, they will get to do so from the bottom of society, where their lack of mastery of such superficialities was meant to place them anyway. But the problem is that such 'superficialities' cannot be taught in a regular classroom; they cannot be 'picked up' later, outside the full context of an early apprenticeship (at home and at school) in 'middle-class-like', school-based ways of doing and being. That is precisely why they work so well as 'gates'. This is also precisely the tragedy of E. D. Hirsch, Jr's much talked about book, *Cultural Literacy*: he is right that without having mastered an extensive list of trivialities people can be (and often are) excluded from 'goods' controlled by dominant groups in the society; he is wrong that this can be taught (in a classroom of all places!) apart from the socially situated practices that these groups have incorporated into their homes and daily lives.[28] There is a real contradiction here, and we ignore it at the peril of our students (no middle-class, 'super baby' producing parents ignore it).

There is a partial way out of this dilemma (there is no total way out without serious change of the social structure). We have seen that raising such concerns to *overt considerations* can lead (not to acquisition certainly, and that must be going on too) but to learning, meta-knowledge. Thus the 'liberal' classroom that avoids overt talk of form and superficialities, of how things work, as well as of their sociocultural-political basis, is no help. Such talk can be powerful so long as one never thinks that in talking about grammar, form, or superficialities one is getting people to acquire Discourses (or languages, for that matter). Of course, such talk is always political talk, but then the absence of such talk is itself a political act (choice, however tacit).[29]

Literacy and Discourses

The distinction between acquisition and learning renders the common sense understanding of 'literacy' very problematic. Take the notion of a 'reading class', a special time set aside for 'reading instruction'. Reading is, at the very least, the ability to interpret print (surely not just the ability to call out the names of letters). But an interpretation of print is just a viewpoint on a set of symbols, and viewpoints are always embedded in a Discourse. Thus, while many different Discourses use reading, even in opposing ways, and while there could well be classes devoted to these Discourses, reading outside such a Discourse (or outside a class devoted to a particular Discourse) would be truly 'in a vacuum'. Acquiring/learning reading is always acquiring/learning some aspect of some Discourse. One can trivialize this insight to a certain degree by trivializing the notion of interpretation (of printed words), until one gets to reading as calling out the names of letters. Analogously, one can deepen the insight by taking successively deeper views of what interpretation means.

There is also the problem with 'reading class' that it stresses learning and not acquisition. To the extent that reading as both decoding and interpretation is a performance (and it is in large part), learning stresses the production of poor performers. If we wanted to stress acquisition, we would have to expose children to reading, and this would always be to expose them to a Discourse whose name would never be 'Reading' (at least not until the student went to the university and earned a degree called 'Reading' and became a member of the 'Reading profession').

To the extent that it is important to have meta-level skills in regard to language, reading class as a place of learning rather than of acquisition might facilitate this, but it is arguable that a reading class would hardly be the best place to do this. Better places would be courses devoted to meta-discussion of language, communication and linguistics, courses devoted to 'rhetoric', courses devoted to foreign languages, including overt discussion of their structures, courses devoted to consideration of the modes of language involved in particular Discourses (e.g., natural science, literature, social science), and many more, none of them remotely deserving of the name 'reading class'. Would anyone have a 'thinking class', devoted not to thinking about anything in particular, but just to 'practise' thinking generally as a non-specialized skill? It would be a stupid idea, as stupid as believing that one can test for a thing called (general) 'intelligence', and stupid for the same reasons.

Such 'reading classes' encapsulate the common sense notion of literacy as 'the ability to read and write' (intransitively, 'read and write anything, nothing in particular, reading and writing generally' — there is no such thing), a notion that is nowhere near as coherent as it at first sounds.

I believe it is only within the context of the notion of Discourse that we can achieve a viable definition of 'literacy', and it is to this definition that I now turn. All humans, barring serious disorder, become members of one Discourse free, so to speak. This is our socioculturally determined ways of thinking, feeling, valuing, and using our native language in face-to-face communication with intimates which we achieve in our initial socialization within the 'family' as this is defined within a given culture. This initial Discourse is used to signal our membership within a particular local community ('people like us').

Some small, so-called 'primitive' cultures function almost like extended families (though never completely so) in that this 'primary' Discourse is usable in a very wide array of social contacts throughout the culture. This is due to the fact that these cultures are small enough to function as a 'society of intimates'. In modern technological and urban societies which function as 'societies of strangers', this 'primary' Discourse is more narrowly useful.[30] Let us refer, then, to this initial Discourse, which is developed in the primary process of enculturation, as a person's 'primary Discourse'.

It is important to realize that even among speakers of English there are socioculturally different primary Discourses, and that these Discourses use language differently. For example, many lower socioeconomic black children use English within their primary Discourse to make sense of their experience differently than do middle-class children.[31] This is not due merely to the fact that they have a different dialect of English. So-called 'Black Vernacular English' is, on structural grounds, only trivially different from standard English by the norms of linguists accustomed to dialect differences around the world.[32] Rather, these children use language, behavior, values and beliefs to give a different shape to their experience.

A person's primary Discourse serves as a 'framework' or 'base' for their acquisition and learning of other Discourses later in life. It also shapes, in part, the form this acquisition and learning will take and the final result. Furthermore, Discourses acquired later in life can influence a person's primary Discourse, having various effects on it, (re-)shaping it in various ways. Adults can then pass on these reshaped primary Discourses to their children. These mutual influences among Discourses underlie the processes of historical change of Discourses. Further, a person's behavior at any point can show influences of various Discourses they know but which the person is not actually using at that moment. Nonetheless, I believe that we can most clearly see people's primary Discourses when they are interacting with 'intimates' (people with whom they share a great deal of common knowledge and experience) in a completely comfortable 'informal' way.[33] On these occasions, their primary Discourse is least influenced by other Discourses they control, and they display the identity most intimately connected to their primary socialization and their membership in an initially acculturating group.

Quite obviously in a society like the US, where there is so much mobility, diffuse class and (sub-)cultural borders, class ambiguity, and so many attempts to deny, change, or otherwise hide one's initial socialization if it was not 'mainstream' enough, there are many complexities around the notion of 'primary Discourse' and many problems in tracing its fate through individual lives. Indeed, these problems are a difficulty not just for scholars studying these matters: the large amount of anomie, alienation and worry about 'self' and 'identity' in the US, and related societies, has its roots in these very problems. I plan to embed the notion of 'literacy' within the framework of Discourses precisely because I believe that issues like these, far from invalidating that framework, are just the ones that we need to study and relate to our educational practice.

Beyond the primary Discourse, there are other Discourses which crucially involve social institutions beyond the family (or the primary socialization group as defined by the culture), no matter how much they also involve the family. These institutions all share the factor that they require one to communicate with non-intimates (or to treat intimates as if they were not intimates). Let us refer to these institutions as 'secondary institutions' (such as schools, work places, stores, government offices, businesses, churches, etc.). Discourses beyond the primary Discourse are developed in association with, and by having access to and practice with (apprenticeships in), these secondary institutions. Thus we will refer to them as 'secondary Discourses'.

These secondary Discourses all build on, and extend, the uses of language and the values, attitudes and beliefs we acquired as part of our primary Discourse, and they may be more or less compatible with the primary Discourses of different social groups. It is a great advantage when any particular secondary Discourse is compatible with your primary one. But all these secondary Discourses involve uses of language, either written or oral, or both, as well as ways of thinking, valuing and behaving, which go beyond the uses of language in our primary Discourse, no matter what group we belong to.

Secondary Discourses can be local, community-based Discourses, or more globally oriented ('public sphere Discourses'). For example, many Americans have Discourses (of different sorts) connected to memberships in community-based churches. The role of certain types of 'fundamentalist' Discourses in many lower and middle-class white communities and of 'evangelical' church-based Discourses in many black communities has been well documented.[34] These Discourses decidedly do not take place just in church buildings, but involve an intricate network of ways of talking, acting and valuing that can be quite pervasive in the lives of these people There are many other community-based Discourses, including, for instance, Discourses used for public contacts like shopping and interactions with authority figures (e.g., police) in various sorts of local communities. It can happen that some of these community-based secondary Discourses (for example, some church-based Discourses) 'filter' into and saturate the primary Discourse and the processes of family-based primary socialization, intimately influencing interaction in the home. Indeed, this is one way that Discourses interact and change historically.

In modern, pluralistic, urban societies, like ours, community-based Discourses often have links to and applications in spheres beyond the local community, and shade into more global, 'public sphere' Discourses. Needless to say, there is a continuum, rather than a clear dichotomy between local community-based and more 'public sphere' secondary Discourses. These more globally oriented, 'public sphere' secondary Discourses include ones used in schools, national media, and in many social, financial and government agencies, as well as many Discourses connected to various sorts of employment and professions. These 'public sphere' secondary Discourses all involve interactions with people well beyond one's initial socializing group and local community. We will see below that these too can 'filter' into and saturate certain groups' primary Discourses.

The key point about secondary Discourses, however, is that they involve, by definition, interaction with people with whom one is either not 'intimate' (with whom one cannot assume lots of shared knowledge and experience) or they involve interactions where one is being 'formal', that is, taking on an identity that transcends the family or primary socializing group and relates one to the wider spheres of the cultural (or sub-cultural) group as a whole — its tradition, or the institutions (e.g., the church in the black community) by which it either perpetuates itself or relates itself to outside groups.

Discourses, primary and secondary, can be studied, in some ways, like languages. In fact, some of the literature on, and approaches to, second language acquisition are relevant to them (if only in a metaphorical way). Two Discourses can *interfere* with one another, like two languages; aspects of one Discourse can be *transferred* to another Discourse, as one can transfer a grammatical feature from one language to another. For instance, the primary Discourse of many middle-class homes has been influenced by secondary Discourses like those used in schools and business. This is much less true of the primary Discourse in many lower socioeconomic black homes, though this primary Discourse has influenced, and been influenced by, the secondary Discourse used in black churches and in parts of the music world (e.g., 'the Blues').

Furthermore, if one has not mastered a particular secondary Discourse which nonetheless one must try to use, several things can happen, things which resemble what can happen when one has failed to master a second language fluently. One can fall back on one's primary Discourse, adjusting it in various ways to try to fit it to the needed functions (very common, but almost always socially disastrous); or one can use another, perhaps related, secondary Discourse; or one can use a simplified, or stereotyped, version of the required secondary Discourse. These processes are similar to those linguists study under the rubrics of 'language contact', 'pidginization', and 'creolization'.[35]

Defining Literacy

I believe that any socially useful definition of 'literacy' must be couched in terms of these notions of primary and secondary Discourse. Thus I define 'literacy' as: *mastery of, or fluent control over, a secondary Discourse*. Therefore, literacy is always plural: *literacies* (there are many of them, since there are many secondary Discourses, and we all have some and fail to have others). If one wanted to be rather pedantic and literalistic, then we could define 'literacy' as: *mastery of, or fluent control over, secondary Discourses involving print* (which is almost all of them in a modern society). One can substitute for 'print' various other sorts of texts and technologies (painting, literature, films, television, computers, telecommunications) — 'props' in the Discourse — to get definitions of various other sorts of 'literacies' (e.g., 'visual literacy', 'computer literacy', 'literary literacy').

But I see no gain from the addition of the phrase 'involving print', other than to assuage the feelings of people committed (as I am not) to reading and writing as decontextualized and isolable skills. In addition, it is clear that many so-called non-literate cultures have secondary Discourses which, while they do not involve print, involve a great many of the same skills, behaviors and ways of thinking that we associate with literacy (for example, the many and diverse practices that have gone under the label 'oral literature').

We can talk about 'community-based literacies' or 'public sphere literacies' in terms of whether they involve mastery of community-based or more public sphere secondary Discourses. We can talk about 'dominant literacies' and 'non-dominant literacies' in terms of whether they involve mastery of dominant or non-dominant secondary Discourses. We can also talk about a literacy being 'liberating' ('powerful') if it can be used as a 'meta-language' or a 'meta-Discourse' (a set of meta-words, meta-values, meta-beliefs) for the critique of other literacies and the way they constitute us as persons and situate us in society (and thus liberating literacies can reconstitute and resituate us). Note that what I have called a 'liberating literacy' is a *particular use* of a Discourse (to critique other ones), not a particular Discourse.

There are two principles which apply to Discourses, and to literacies, which relate them to our previous distinction between acquisition and learning.

> *The Acquisition Principle*
> Any Discourse (primary or secondary) is for most people most of the time only mastered through acquisition, not learning. Thus literacy (fluent control or mastery of a secondary Discourse) is a product of acquisition, not learning; that is, it requires exposure to models in natural, meaningful and functional settings, and (overt) teaching is not liable to be very successful — it may even initially get in the way. Time spent on learning and not acquisition is time not well spent if the goal is mastery in performance.
>
> *The Learning Principle*
> One cannot critique one Discourse with another one (which is the only way seriously to criticize and thus change a Discourse) unless one has meta-level knowledge about both Discourses. This meta-knowledge is best developed through learning, though often learning applied to a Discourse one has to a certain extent already acquired. Thus 'liberating literacy', as defined above, almost always involves learning, and not just acquisition.

The point of these principles is that acquisition and learning are means to quite different goals, though in our culture we very often confuse these means and thus do not get what we thought and hoped we would. Note that it is a consequence of the second principle that the goal of learning (and teaching in the standard sense) is 'liberation' (in the sense of acquiring 'liberating literacies').

We need now to distinguish two senses of 'teach' for our further discussion: 'teach$_l$' (with a little subscript 'l') means what I have repeatedly referred to as 'overt teaching', teaching that leads to *learning* (hence the 'l') by a process of explanation and analysis that breaks down material into its analytic 'bits' and develops 'meta-knowledge' of the structure of a given domain of knowledge. While many 'liberal' approaches to education look down on this mode of teaching, I do not; I have already said that I believe that meta-knowledge can be a form of power and liberation.

'Teach$_a$' (with a little subscripted 'a') means to apprentice someone in a master–apprentice relationship in a social practice (Discourse) wherein you scaffold their growing ability to, say, do, value, believe, within that Discourse, through demonstrating your mastery and supporting theirs even when it barely exists (i.e., you make it look like they can do what they really cannot do). 'Teaching$_a$' in regard to early literacy in school-based Discourses, for instance, amounts to doing much the same thing middle-class, 'super baby' producing parents do when they 'do books' with their children (we will see an example below). 'Teaching$_a$' facilitates *acquisition*. 'Teaching$_a$' always precedes 'teaching$_l$' if 'teaching$_l$' is to be successful; 'teaching$_a$' without 'teaching$_l$' can lead to successful, but 'colonized' students. They are different practices, and good teachers are good at both.

Two Theorems that Follow from the Definition of 'Literacy'

My definition of 'literacy' may seem innocuous, at least to someone already convinced that decontextualized views of print are meaningless. Nonetheless, several 'theorems' follow from it, theorems that have rather direct and unsettling consequences.

First Theorem. Though we have sometimes appealed above to the analogy between languages and Discourses, Discourses (and therefore literacies) are not like languages in one very important regard. Someone can speak English, but not fluently. However, someone cannot engage in a Discourse in a less than fully fluent manner. You are either in it or you're not. Discourses are connected with displays of an identity — failing to display an identity fully is tantamount to announcing you do not have that identity — at best you are a pretender or a beginner.

Very often, learners of second languages 'fossilize' at a stage of development significantly below full fluency. This cannot happen with Discourses. If one has fossilized in the acquisition of a Discourse prior to full 'fluency' (and they are no longer in the process of apprenticeship), then one's very lack of fluency marks one as a *non-member* of the group that controls this Discourse, as *not* having the identity or social role which is the rationale for the existence of the Discourse in the first place. In fact, the lack of fluency may very well mark one as a *pretender* to the social role instantiated in the Discourse (an *outsider* with pretenses to being an *insider*).

There is, thus, no workable 'affirmative action' for Discourses: you cannot be let into the game after missing the apprenticeship and be expected to have a fair shot at playing it. Social groups will not, usually, give their social goods — whether these are status or solidarity or both — to those who are not 'natives' or 'fluent users' (but see below on 'mushfake' for a mitigation of this claim). While this is an *empirical* claim, I believe it is one supported by the sociolinguistic literature.

You will notice that I have built Theorem 1 into my definition of 'literacy' (which I have defined as 'mastery of or fluent control over' a secondary Discourse). If you have only partial control over a Discourse, you are not a member of the Discourse; you are an apprentice, an 'outsider', or a 'pretender'. Since Discourses, as we have pointed out, are partly defined by their oppositions to other Discourses, they often use negative attitudes towards those who do not control them as part of this self-definition process. It is almost a contradiction to say that you can be less than fluent in a Discourse (and not still be an apprentice, apprentices are given a 'special role') — the Discourse would use *you* to define itself as 'other' than *you*. A given Discourse could (and often does) reserve a sort of 'colonized' role for you: a person internalized by the Discourse as a subordinate, whose very subordination is used as validation for the prestige and power of the Discourse. It is unfortunate that, failing to understand Theorem 1, many language and literacy classrooms produce (usually unconsciously) from their 'non-mainstream' students such colonized individuals (and the students may or may not be aware they have this status *vis-à-vis* the Discourse). These colonized students control (and accept the values in) the Discourse just enough to keep signaling that others in the Discourse are their 'betters' and to become complicit with their own subordination. Thus, *vis-à-vis* a Discourse, you are an *insider*, *colonized*, or an *outsider*.

Defining literacy so as to respect Theorem 1 (so that there are no people who are partially literate or semi-literate, or, in any other way, literate, but not fluently so) has one practical consequence: notions like 'functional literacy' and 'competency-based literacy' are simply incoherent. They imply that one has a literacy but not all of it, so to speak (however, they never specify which Discourse is being mastered), but 'just enough' to 'function'. As far as literacy goes, there are only 'fluent speakers' (metaphorically, because Discourses are not just ways of talking, but ways of talking, acting, thinking, valuing etc.) and 'apprentices'. 'Functional literacy' is another term for the literacy of the colonized.

Second Theorem. Primary Discourses, no matter whose they are, can never really give rise to *liberating literacies*. For a literacy to be liberating, it must contain both the Discourse it is going to critique and a set of meta-elements (language, words, attitudes, values) in terms of which an analysis and criticism can be carried out. Primary Discourses are initial and contain only themselves. They can be embedded in later Discourses and critiqued, but they can never serve as a meta-language in terms of which a critique of secondary Discourses can be carried out.

Our second theorem is not liable to be very popular. Theorem 2 says that all primary Discourses are limited. 'Liberation', in the sense I am using the term here, resides in acquiring at least one more Discourse in terms of which our own primary Discourse (as well as other secondary Discourses we may acquire) can be analyzed and critiqued. Note that since one can use a variety of different secondary Discourses to critique other Discourses (e.g., psychology used to critique linguistics, feminism used to critique linguistics, fundamentalism used to critique linguistics), there are always many possible critiques, and it is always advantageous (more liberating) to be able to carry out more than a single such critique (and thus to have mastered more than one secondary Discourse in such a way that it can be used as a 'meta-language' for the critique of Discourses — and, remember, such mastery involves both acquisition and learning).

This is not to say that primary Discourses do not contain critical attitudes and critical language (indeed, many of them contain implicit and explicit racism and classism). It is to say that they cannot carry out an *authentic* criticism, because they cannot verbalize the words, acts, values and attitudes they *use*, and they cannot mobilize explicit meta-knowledge. Theorem 2 is quite traditional and conservative (it is the analogue of Socrates' theorem that the unexamined life is not worth living, although we might add to Socrates' dictum the additional one that our unexamined life often makes other people's lives not worth living).

There are other theorems that can be deduced from the theory of literacy here developed, but these two should, at least, make clear what sorts of consequences the theory has. It should also make it quite clear that the theory is *not* a neutral meta-language in terms of which one can argue for *just any* conclusions about literacy.

Some Consequences for Practice

Let me briefly mention some practical consequences of the above remarks. Mainstream middle-class children often *acquire* school-based literacies through experiences in the home both before and during school, as well as by the opportunities school gives them to practise what they are acquiring. Children from non-mainstream homes often do not get the opportunities to *acquire* dominant secondary Discourses (for example, those connected with the school) prior to school in their homes, due to the lack of access their parents have to these secondary Discourses. When coming to school, they cannot practise what they haven't yet got, and they are exposed mostly to a process of learning and not acquisition. Since little acquisition thereby goes on, they often cannot use this learning/teaching to develop meta-level skills, since this requires some degree of acquisition of secondary Discourses to use in the critical process. Furthermore, research shows that many school-based secondary Discourses conflict with the values and viewpoints in some non-mainstream children's primary Discourses and other community-based secondary Discourses.[36]

While the above remarks may all seem rather theoretical, they lead to some obvious practical suggestions for directions future research and intervention efforts ought to take.

1 Settings which focus on acquisition, not learning, should be stressed if the goal is to help non-mainstream children attain mastery of literacies. This is certainly not liable to be a traditional classroom setting (let alone a traditional 'reading class'), but natural and functional environments, which may or may not happen to be inside a school.

2 We should realize that teaching$_1$ and learning are connected with the development of meta-level cognitive and linguistic skills. They will work better if we explicitly realize this and build this realization into our curricula. Further, they must be ordered and integrated with acquisition in viable ways if they are to have any effect other than obstruction.

3 Mainstream children are using much of the teaching$_1$/learning they get in school not (just) to *learn* (in fact, they often get few real critical skills from the teaching that goes on) but to *acquire*, by practising developing skills (they often succeed even in the face of bad teaching$_1$ and in the absence of teaching$_1$ in school). We should thus honor this practice effect directly and build on it, rather than leave it as a surreptitious and indirect by-product of teaching$_1$/learning.

4 Learning should lead to the ability for all children — mainstream and non-mainstream — to critique their primary Discourses and secondary Discourses, including dominant secondary Discourses. This requires exposing children to a variety of alternative primary Discourses and secondary ones (not necessarily so that they acquire them, but so that they learn about them). It also requires realizing explicitly that this is what good teaching$_1$ and learning is good at. We rarely realize that this is where we fail mainstream children just as much as non-mainstream ones.

5 We must take seriously that no matter how good our schools become, both as environments where acquisition can go on (so involving meaningful and functional settings) and where learning can go on, the non-mainstream child will always have more conflicts in using and thus mastering dominant secondary Discourses, since they conflict more seriously with his primary Discourse and community-based secondary ones. This is precisely what it means to be 'non-mainstream'. This does not mean we should give up. It means that research and intervention efforts must have sensitivity to these conflicts built into them. It also requires, I believe, that we must stress research and intervention efforts that facilitate the development of wider and more humane concepts of 'gate keeping'.

Mushfake and Tension between Discourses

This last point brings us to the notion of 'tension' or 'conflict' between Discourses and within individuals while they use certain Discourses. We can always ask how much *tension or conflict* is present between any two of a person's Discourses. I have argued above that some degree of conflict and tension (if only given the discrete historical origins of particular Discourses) will almost always be present. However, for some people, there are more overt and direct conflicts between two or more of their Discourses than there are for others (e.g., many women academics feel conflict between certain feminist Discourses and certain standard academic Discourses, e.g., traditional literary criticism).

I would argue that when such conflict or tension exists, it can deter acquisition of one or the other or both of the conflicting Discourses, or, at least, affect the fluency of a mastered Discourse on certain occasions of use (e.g., where other stressful factors also impinge on the occasion, as in interview). It is important to see that people (e.g., women and minorities and other 'non-mainstream' people) can be deterred from power and control not just by their failure to master dominant Discourses, but also by the fact that their often very real mastery of these Discourses can falter under stress more quickly than more 'mainstream' people (because of the extra cognitive work that the use of such Discourses implies, given the conflicts 'non-mainstream' people experience internally while using them).

Very often dominant groups in a society apply rather constant 'tests' of the fluency of the dominant Discourses in which their power is symbolized; these tests become both tests of 'natives' or, at least, 'fluent users' of the Discourse, and *gates* to exclude 'non-natives' (people whose very conflicts with dominant Discourses show they were not, in fact, 'born' to them and who can often show this even when they have full mastery of a dominant Discourse on most occasions of use). The sorts of tension and conflict we have mentioned here are particularly acute when they involve tension and conflict between one's primary Discourse and a dominant secondary Discourse, since one's primary Discourse defines one's 'home' identity and that of people with whom one is intimate and intimately connected.

We have seen throughout our discussion that 'non-mainstream' students and their teachers are in a bind. One is not in a Discourse unless one has mastered it, and mastery comes about through acquisition, not learning. The acquisition of many dominant school-based Discourses on the part of mainstream students is facilitated by the fact that their primary Discourses have adopted some of the features of these dominant Discourses, by their early practice in the home with these dominant Discourses (which their parents have usually mastered), and by the constant support in these Discourses their homes give to the schools. Their mastery is also facilitated by the lesser conflict they feel in acquiring and using these dominant Discourses.

All these facilitating factors do not exist for many non-mainstream students, who are further hampered by the fact that traditional classrooms and schools are poor at facilitating acquisition (however good they are at facilitating learning, which assumes a good deal of acquisition has already gone on). These non-mainstream students often fail fully to master school-based dominant Discourses (especially the 'superficialities of form and correctness' that serve as such good 'gates', given their imperviousness to late acquisition in classrooms without community support). They often gain just enough mastery to ensure that they continually mark themselves as 'outsiders' while using them, and are, at best, colonized by them.

Beyond changing the social structure, is there much hope? No, there is not. So we better get on about changing the social structure. Now, whose job is that? I would say, people who have been allotted the job of teaching Discourses, for example, English teachers, language teachers, composition teachers, TESOL teachers, critical-thinking and basic-skills teachers. What can teachers of Discourses do? As we said above, there happens to be an advantage to failing to master mainstream Discourses, that is, there is an advantage to being socially 'maladapted'. When we come across a situation where we are unable to accommodate or adapt (as many minority students do on being faced, late in the game, with having to acquire mainstream Discourses), we become consciously aware of what we are trying to do, or being called upon to do, and often gain deep insight into the matter. This insight ('meta-knowledge') can make one better able to manipulate the society in which the Discourse is dominant, provided it is coupled with the right sort of liberating literacy (a theory of the society and one's position in it, that is, a base for *resistance* to oppression and inequality).

The big question is: if one cannot acquire Discourses save through active social practice, and it is difficult to compete with the mastery of those admitted early to the game when one has entered it as late as high school or college, what can be done to see to it that meta-knowledge and resistance are coupled with Discourse development? The problem is deepened by the fact that true acquisition of many mainstream Discourses involves, at least while being in them, active complicity with values that conflict with one's home and community-based Discourses, especially for many women and minorities.

I certainly have no complete and final answer to what is a massive social question, but I have two views to push nonetheless. I will phrase my views largely as they are relevant to teachers in high school and college: first, true acquisition (which is always full fluency) is not (very often) going to happen late in the game. However, for anything close to acquisition to occur, classrooms must be active apprenticeships in 'academic' social practices, and, in most cases, must connect with these social practices as they are also carried on outside the 'composition' or 'language' class, elsewhere in the university. Second, though true acquisition is probably not possible in many cases, what I will call '*mushfake* Discourse' is possible. 'Mushfake' is a term from prison culture meaning to make do with something less when the real thing is not available.[37] When prison inmates make hats from underwear to protect their hair from lice, the hats are mushfake. Elaborate craft items made from used wooden match sticks are another example of mushfake. By 'mushfake Discourse', I mean partial acquisition coupled with meta-knowledge and strategies to 'make do' (strategies ranging from always having a memo edited to ensure no plural, possessive and third-person 's' agreement errors to active use of black culture skills at 'psyching out' interviewers, or to strategies of 'rising to the meta-level' in an interview so that the interviewer is thrown off stride by having the rules of the game implicitly referred to in the act of carrying them out).

Mushfake Discourse can, to a certain extent, short circuit Theorem 1 and decolonize students. We cannot pretend it will put an end to the effects of racism or classism, nor that it will open all doors. We can hope it will open some doors, while helping to change the society in the process. It is, at least, something to do while 'waiting for the revolution'.

I propose that we ought to produce 'mushfaking', resisting students, full of meta-knowledge. But isn't that to politicize teaching? A Discourse is an integration of saying, doing and *valuing*, and all socially-based valuing is political. All successful teaching (a or l), that is, teaching that inculcates Discourse and not just content, is political. That, too, is a truism.

Notes

1 The literature devoted to what I am calling the new 'literacy studies' is already quite large. For a small sample, and the best works with which to begin, see Courtney Cazden, *Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988); Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987); Shirley Brice Heath, *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Ronald Scollon and Suzanne B. K. Scollon, *Narrative, Literacy and Face in Interethnic Communication* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1981); Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole, *The Psychology of Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Brian Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Gordon Wells, *The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1986).

2 The sort of work I am talking about is the stock in trade of a great deal of research in adult literacy, especially that devoted to 'competency-based approaches to literacy', in government reports, and especially in Unesco reports, e.g., *Functional Literacy: Why and How* (Unesco, 1970); *Practical Guide to Functional Literacy* (Unesco, 1973), and many more.

3 For discussion, see Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy*, pp. 317ff.

4 See Michael T. Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), Chapters 11–14 for examples of people newly confronted with the commodity myth who found it anything but 'natural' (in fact, they thought it the work of the 'devil').

5 For a brief historical overview of the concept of 'functional literacy', see Kenneth Levine, *The Social Context of Literacy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 22–46.

6 See Elaine Chaika, *Language: The Social Mirror*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Newbury House, 1989); John J. Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and Nessa Wolfson, *Perspectives: Sociolinguistics and TESOL* (Cambridge, Mass.: Newbury House, 1989).

7 For a wonderful illustration of this point, see Thom Huebner, *A Longitudinal Analysis: The Acquisition of English* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Karoma Press, 1983).

8 The connections between language use and social identity/social roles is much less studied than either grammar or language use per se, but see, in particular, Irving Goffmann, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959); *ibid.*, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1967); *ibid.*, *Forms of Talk* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); as well as John J. Gumperz (ed.), *Language and Social Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Richard Sennett's book, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974) is a fascinating study of the changing roles people play in their public and private lives, and the relationship of these roles to their social and physical environments.

9 'Performance and ethnic style in job interviews', in John J. Gumperz, *Language and Social Identity*, pp. 119–144.

10 See Fred Erickson and Jeffrey J. Schulz, *The Counselor as Gatekeeper: Social Interaction in Interviews* (New York: Academic Press, 1982).

11 For the nature of 'mainstream' job interviews in Great Britain, and further examples of cross-cultural problems of communication in such interviews, see John J. Gumperz, T. C. Jupp and Celia Roberts, *Crosstalk: A Study of Cross-Cultural Communication* (Southall: National Centre for Industrial Language Training and BBC Continuing Education Department, 1979). The situation in the US is in no essential way different. See also Erickson and Schultz, *The Counselor as Gatekeeper*.

12 While I am using 'Discourse' in a somewhat novel way, and the reader should consider how I define and use the word, rather than the uses it is given in other sources, notions similar to mine have, of course, been used in other work. Michel Foucault's related (though not identical) ideas about discourse and 'discursive practices' have influenced me, and the connections between Foucault's work and the ways in which I discuss 'Discourse' will become clear, for those who know Foucault's work, at various points in this chapter, and in the next chapter. For a sample of Foucault's work, see *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans Alan Sheridan-Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage

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Books, 1973); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977); *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978); *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Meplam and Kate Soper (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980); *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

13 See Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980); Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); Fredrick Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981); Diane Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984).

14 Diane Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse*, pp. 1–7.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 1–7.

16 See Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 43–64. More generally, see Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn (eds), *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1985); Toril Moi, *Sexual Textual Politics* (London: Methuen, 1985); and Janet Todd, *Feminist Literary History* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

17 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

18 Most of Foucault's works are devoted to the ways in which discursive practices develop through history and how they are embedded in various social institutions; see the references in Note 12 above. See David Olson, 'From utterance to text: The bias of language in speech and writing', *Harvard Educational Review*, 47, 3 (1977): 257–281 for the historical development of the 'essay form' in English, a form of writing and thinking embedded in many school-based Discourses. For historically and culturally situated critiques of 'essayist thinking', and Olson's cognitive claims for it, see Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice*, and Scollon and Scollon, *Narrative, Literacy and Face*. For treatment of the historical development of various Discourses, see, on history: Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); on anthropological Discourse: James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); on literary criticism: Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984); Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1987); on the natural sciences: Ludwik Fleck, *The Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Gerald Holton, *Thematic Origins of Scientific Thought: Kepler to Einstein*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); on educational practices centering on textbooks: Allan Luke, *Literacy, Textbooks and Ideology* (Lewes: Falmer Press, 1988); Suzanne de Castell, Allan Luke and Carmen Luke (eds), *Language, Authority and Criticism* (Lewes: Falmer Press, 1989).

19 In second language research, the distinction is most often associated with the work of Stephen Krashen; see Stephen Krashen, *Inquiries and Insights* (Hayward, Calif.: Alemany Press, 1985); *ibid.*, *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* (London: Longman, 1985). For critical discussion of Krashen's work, and a general discussion of theories of second language development, see Barry McLaughlin, *Theories of Second-Language Learning* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987). On why first languages are not 'learned', but 'acquired', see the discussion in Chapter 2, and Steven Pinker, *Learnability and Cognition: The Acquisition of Argument Structure* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

20 For an even-handed treatment of the issues, see William Rutherford and Michael Sharwood Smith (eds), *Grammar and Second Language Teaching* (New York: Newbury House, 1988). On individual differences in second language development, see Peter Skehan, *Individual Differences in Second-Language Learning* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989); Elaine Tarone, *Variation in Interlanguage* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988). Whatever the statistics are as to grammar development in classrooms (and they vary, of course, from case to case), given our typical language classrooms and school systems (see discussion in Chapter 2 about 'The teacher teaches French'), the rate of successful language acquisition in classrooms has never been a source of pride to language teachers.

21 See especially Roland Tharp and Ronald Gallimore, *Rousing Minds to Life: Teaching, Learning and Schooling in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) for a full discussion of an apprenticeship-based system of education that worked for minority children on a large scale. See also Denis Newman, Peg Griffin and Michael Cole, *The Construction Zone: Working for Cognitive Change in School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), as well as *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition*, Center for Human Information Processing, University of California at San Diego for a great many highly relevant papers and new research in this area.

22 See Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); *ibid.*, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), especially Chapter 1, 'The Word of God', pp. 1–44.

23 This point is made by Lev Vygotsky, *The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky, Volume 1: Problems of General Psychology. Including the Volume Thinking and Speech*, ed. Robert W. Rieber and Aaron S. Carton (New York: Plenum, 1987), see Chapter 6, 'The Development of Scientific Concepts in Childhood', pp. 167–241.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 222.

25 'Speech, language and non-literacy: The Limba of Sierra Leone', in Ruth Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 45–58, see p. 48.

26 Mark A. Clarke, 'Second language acquisition as a clash of consciousness', *Language Learning*, 26, 2 (1976): 377–390; Fred Erickson, 'Transformation and school success: The politics and culture of educational achievement', *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 18, 4 (1987): 335–356; Ray McDermott, 'The explanation of minority school failure, again', *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 18, 4 (1987): 361–364; Heath, *Ways with Words*; Henry T. Trueba (ed.), *Success or Failure?: Learning and the Language Minority Student* (New York: Newbury House, 1987); Henry T. Trueba, *Raising Silent Voices: Educating the Linguistic Minorities for the 21st Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Newbury House, 1989).

27 Nancy Mack, 'The social nature of words: Voices, dialogues, quarrels', *The Writing Instructor*, 8, 4 (1989): 157–165.

28 E. D. Hirsch, Jr, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

29 I have in mind here many classroom approaches that go by such names as 'process writing', 'whole language approaches', 'open classrooms'. I am *not* condemning any of these approaches, nor arguing for 'traditional' approaches or any 'back to basics' movement. Further, many different things go on in classrooms under the rubric of 'process writing', for example; many of them quite similar to 'traditional' and 'form-based' approaches (see Candace Mitchell, *Process Writing in Theory and Practice*, Doctoral Dissertation, School of Education, Boston University, 1989). But we should be aware that failing to focus on 'forms', and stressing 'meaning' and the student's own 'voice', can privilege those students who already know the 'rules' and the 'forms', especially if grades are assigned partly on how well the writing ultimately matches traditional expectations, either in the 'process writing' class itself or in later more content-based classes it is 'preparing' the students for. The 'process writing' class exists in an overall system, and it can become complicit with that system in replicating the hierarchical status quo in yet another form, and one that is, perhaps, more effective in that the students who fail, fail without understanding the basis of the system that failed them. The grading and overall evaluation system is 'mystified' by the focus on processes, voice and meaning in the 'process writing' class, a focus that often does not represent the rest of the overall educational system in which the 'process writing' class is situated, and, indeed, one that is not always consistently practised in the class itself. I do not believe in any particular methodology, nor in 'methodological fixes'. Rather, I believe many methodologies work when they are coupled with the sort of sociocultural and political awareness hinted at in the text.

30 For the contrast between a 'society of intimates' and a 'society of strangers' in anthropological terms, see Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), and, in linguistic terms, see Talmy Givon, *On Understanding Grammar* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

31 See (just a sample of a large literature): Roger D. Abrahams, *Positively Black* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970); *ibid.*, *Talking Black* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1976); John Baugh, *Black Street Speech: Its History, Structure and Survival* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1983); Edith A. Folb, *Runnin' Down Some Lines: The Language and Culture of Black Teenagers* (Cambridge,

Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980); Shirley Brice Heath, 'What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and at School', *Language in Society*, 11, 1 (1982): 49–76; *ibid.*, *Ways with Words*; Thomas Kochman (ed.), *Rappin' and Stylin' Out: Communication in Urban Black America* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1972); Thomas Kochman, *Black and White Styles in Conflict* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1981); William Labov, *Language in the Inner City* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972); Sarah Michaels, ' "Sharing time": Children's narrative styles and differential access to literacy', *Language in Society*, 10, 4 (1981): 423–442; *ibid.*, 'Hearing the connections in children's oral and written discourse', *Journal of Education*, 167 (1985): 36–56; Geneva Smitherman, *Talkin and Testifin: The Language of Black America* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1977).

32 On 'Black Vernacular English', see Baugh, *Black Street Speech*; Labov, *Language in the Inner City*; Walt Wolfram and Ralph W. Fasold, *The Study of Social Dialects in American English* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

33 I adopt this notion of a 'vernacular' form from Labov, *Language in the Inner City*; *ibid.*, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972). See for discussion, Leslie Milroy, *Language and Social Networks* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980).

34 See Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swindler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) on the influences of 'fundamentalist' Discourse (as well as 'clinical' Discourse) on contemporary American life; much of the literature cited in Note 31 above mentions the influence of the black church (and of institutions like jazz and the blues) on black primary Discourse, and vice versa; see also Bruce A. Rosenberg, *The Art of the American Folk Preacher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Jeff Todd Titon, *Early Downhome Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1977). See also Sterling Stucky, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) for a penetrating discussion of the historical survival of African religious discursive practices in the United States.

35 See Roger Andersen, ed., *Pidginization and Creolization as Language Acquisition* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1983); Terence Odlin, *Language Transfer: Cross-Linguistic Influence in Language Learning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). See also Suzanne Romaine, *Pidgin and Creole Languages* (London: Longman, 1988).

36 See the references in Note 26 above.

37 I borrow the term 'mushfake' from Nancy Mack, 'The social nature of words'.

Reading 2B

Harris S. (1990) 'Walking through cultural doors: Aborigines, communication and cultural continuity', in C. Hedrick & R. Holton (eds) *Cross-cultural Communication and Professional Education.*, Centre for Multicultural Studies, Flinders University of SA, pp. 127–138.

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WALKING THROUGH CULTURAL DOORS: ABORIGINES, COMMUNICATION, SCHOOLING AND CULTURAL CONTINUITY[1]

Dr. Stephen Harris

Stephen Harris' main research work has been into culturally shaped Aboriginal learning contexts and Aboriginal two-way schooling. He worked for eight years as an advisor in the NT Aboriginal bilingual education program, has been involved in Aboriginal teacher training and is now a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education in the Northern Territory University.

Abstract of Presentation:

Aboriginal and Anglo cultures are so fundamentally different in their world views that they can be said to be incompatible. Yet Aboriginal parents seem to be saying that they want their children to learn the Anglo culture's 3Rs and to grow up Aboriginal. If these two aspirations are not to be mutually exclusive, and if schools are not to undermine Aboriginal culture, Harris suggests that Anglos need to understand the possible nature of and accept the necessity for the Aboriginal invention of two-way schooling, and, it would follow, even two-way living.

In thinking about Aboriginal/Anglo relationships in a general sense but more particularly in the context of schooling, phrases such as "living in two worlds", "culture domain separation", "incompatible cultures", or to take an extreme and easily misunderstood example, "separate development", seem to make some people nervous - either because such phrases seem at best naive, or at worst racist or dangerous. However, in this paper I want to urge that we develop a much stronger theory of situations: and that we see Aboriginal/Anglo relations in this country as a special context in which we should be open to those solutions that at least some Aboriginal people may have been faintly trying to suggest to us for many years.

I need to say at the beginning that my experience comes mostly from the Northern Territory and that I am talking about Aborigines from remote areas, or those sometimes called traditionally oriented. But I believe the principles I discuss are more or less true for all Aboriginal groups.[2] I realise there is significant variety between all Aboriginal groups but there are also significant continuities. (Evidence of this is now coming to light in work written or edited by people such as Eades, Beckett, Keen, Cowlishaw and Malin.) Because I am speaking about broad principles of culture maintenance among very small ethnic minorities I hope the use of the general term "Aborigines" will be acceptable. I also need to say that I am talking to non-Aborigines. There is no point in non-Aborigines trying to tell Aborigines what they should do, because only what Aborigines invent themselves will gain their support. This paper is about a partly articulated Aboriginal social invention, but also about how others might think about that invention and co-operate with it.

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[1] The ideas in this paper are developed in much more detail and related more directly to schooling in a book by the same author, *Two-way Aboriginal Schooling*, to be published. This talk has a fair amount of overlap with two recent papers by the same author:
a. "Culture Boundaries, Culture Maintenance - in - Change, and Two-Way Aboriginal Schools", *Curriculum Perspectives* Vol. 8, No. 2, October 1988, and
b. "'Coming Up Level' without 'Losing Themselves': the dilemma of formal tertiary training for Aborigines", in *Learning My Way*, W.A.C.A.E., Mt. Lawley, Perth, 1988.

[2] There is great variety between various sub-groups of Aboriginal society, within both urban-living groups and remote and rural groups. Urban Aborigines do not yet seem to be theorising explicitly about two-way living or schooling in relation to themselves. Among those remote Aborigines thinking about two-way schooling there are four or five current approaches to two-way schooling or domain schooling, some of these not yet well articulated. One approach would be the outstation movement including the Lutheran Mission's approach at Hermannsburg; another would be when Aboriginal parents send their children to an all-white context in interstate boarding schools; another approach would be the Strelley and Yipirinya models of bilingual education; another the Yirrkala approach where the emphasis on domain separation is not so sharp, (see Yunupingu and Wunungmurra below) and another is the view that Aboriginal schools virtually should be for English only (see Poulson, below). Finally, the Catholic Education system in the Kimberlies is the only large system in Aboriginal Australia to adopt a version of two-way

What is so special about the Aboriginal/Anglo relationship situation? For one thing there is no argument about who was here first: no debate in terms of current international morality about who owned the land and who was conquered and who did the usurping. Aboriginal people are here under very different circumstances than migrants are. Migrants volunteered to come here and thus implied a willingness to live by the core values held by the host majority. Aborigines, while they hold very strongly to some values that would be universally praised (such as the maintenance of harmony within the group, live-and-let-live and individual rights of independent action) feel themselves under no obligation to conform to Western core values. A few years ago a lot of discussion started about how Australia could be a multicultural society because all the cultures - the British, Greeks, Italians, Germans, Hungarians and Vietnamese could share the same core values. The idea was that if we shared these basic values we could live happily together and afford to be different on all the less important issues such as clothes, manners, foods, religion and so on. The core values were thought to be those such as a belief in the fairness of a democratic system of government; a belief in the economic system of free business enterprise; the system of law where individual rights are looked after; the freedom of choice in religious matters, and the importance of English as a national language through which all the different groups could communicate.

Some Aboriginal people questioned this view of multiculturalism. I first read about its dangers to Aboriginal culture in 1983 in a paper by John Bucknall (1982) in which he said that the Strelley people (near Port Hedland in W.A.) could not agree with these core values for life inside Aboriginal society. They believed there were ways other than democratic elections to get leadership. They could not agree with an economic system inside their group that allowed a man to get wealthy and the rest of his family to stay poor. They could not agree with the interpretation of individual rights which said that just because a girl is over 16 she is free to go around with any man of any culture she wishes. The Strelley leaders saw, further, that a school which taught these values would be undercutting Aboriginal world view. The one exception they supported was English as a national language.

Another special feature about our situation is that the Aboriginal population is very small and scattered: Aborigines are between 1 and 2% of the population and no serious political threat in terms of voting numbers or threat of secession or armed rebellion.

Another feature of the Aboriginal/Anglo situation is that there is no deep-seated religious animosity because Aboriginal religion is so different from most other religions in Australia that the points of comparison in values are hardly recognised as religious in origin.

Another special feature of the Aboriginal/Anglo situation is the continued refusal of many Aborigines to participate fully in major Anglo social institutions. For example, the Northern Territory, (under direct Commonwealth leadership until 1978 when self-government was obtained) has for at least 25 years provided fully staffed and equipped schools to all larger Aboriginal communities. It also provides a comparatively excellent Aboriginal teacher training college at Batchelor and a relatively sophisticated bilingual education program in most larger Aboriginal schools. While there have been some positive results of these efforts school attendance in most remote communities is poor and the vast majority of Aboriginal children still plateau academically

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learning as a system-wide policy. (See *Two-Way Learning: Language and Culture in Schools* (1986) by the Kimberley Catholic Education Language Team. Revised 1987, 1988). All of these approaches are exploratory and will probably be further defined in the future. *(continued from previous page)* at about grades 3 or 4. Of course there are special difficulties and injustices in this delivery service. For example, most Anglo teachers are trained to teach white children and thus are untrained in some significant ways for the Aboriginal children they actually teach. This is something Anglo parents would see as an insult if the positions were reversed. Of course the future will see major changes when there are sufficient trained Aboriginal teachers to allow Aboriginal management of Aboriginal schools.

The Western economic system is another example of a major institution in this country in which Aborigines participate very little.

Another special feature of Aboriginal/Anglo relations in Australia is that both groups understand relatively little about each other. Anglos often view Aborigines as delinquent whites, and Aborigines often view Anglos as delinquent Aborigines. Each group is still largely a mystery to the other - except for those few on each side who make special efforts to learn about the other. To support this claim (and because this Conference is about cross-cultural communication) I'll give a few examples of contrasting rules of interpersonal communication that I believe too few new teachers know about. Then (because differences in world view are at the heart of cross-cultural communication breakdown) I'll give a few examples of contrasting rules of interpersonal communication that I believe too few new teachers know about. Then (because differences in world view are at the heart of cross-cultural communication breakdown) I'll give examples of differences in world view between the two groups.

The following contrasts were observed mostly at Milingimbi in the mid-seventies (Harris, 1980), but I have reason to believe they are still valid today, and valid in many parts of remote Aboriginal Australia.

There are a number of important ways in which Aboriginal expectations about talking behaviour are distinct from those of Anglos. For example, if a Milingimbi Aboriginal person agrees to do something in the future it implies less of a firm commitment than it does to Anglos. Milingimbi Yolngu relate more pragmatically to present circumstances and see no reason to follow through on what looked like being a pleasure if it changes into a chore. "Dishonesty" or "rudeness" is not involved: what is involved are different definitions and cut-off points around what constitutes legitimate extenuating circumstances in failure to keep commitments.

Another important feature of Yolngu (the Aboriginal name for themselves in N.E. Arnhemland) verbal manners is that it is socially acceptable to ignore questions. Anglos always answer questions, even if with an evasion. Similarly, Milingimbi Yolngu rarely use hypothetical questions, whereas Anglos regularly use them to clarify and explain. The Yolngu also resist too many questions, and find it confusing to answer classroom questions when it is clear that the teachers already know the answers.

Another contrast in verbal manners is that talking forthrightly and strongly can be much more offensive to Yolngu than to Anglos. "Speaking rough" or too forcefully is associated with personal animosity and anger, and a teacher who uses "rough talk" to discipline a misbehaving student can easily lose the initiative because his or her inappropriate verbal behaviour becomes a greater crime than that of the student. The Yolngu do not have an impersonal debate form.

Another verbal behaviour that Anglos find hard to accept is the way Yolngu tend to leave it up to the person being asked to work out whether a favour is reasonable or not. Among Anglos the burden of working out whether a request is reasonable lies more with the asker. This is the origin of the rule that to use a "white lie" as an excuse to avoid having to meet a request that seems unreasonable is not "dishonest" behaviour, but fully acceptable in the context of avoiding personal confrontation and keeping the peace. These examples are sufficient to demonstrate potential areas of communication breakdown in these cross-cultural classrooms. (See also Von Sturmer, 1981).

Quite apart from differences in the ways in which languages are used (ie sociolinguistic differences), languages also differ markedly in the way in which they divide up and characterise the universe of human experience (i.e. semantic differences). Christie (1984) has written about differences in semantic structures in ideas frequently used in Western Schooling.

Referring again to the language of the Milingimbi Yolngu, Christie (1984) has looked at the range of meanings conveyed by Yolgnu words referring to, or encoding purposeful behaviour. In an analysis of a range of words and structures he found two things. Firstly, there is a general de-emphasis on purposefulness. For example, the Yolngu words for thinking, learning and knowing, *guyanga* being the main one, refer most often to unintentional activities like worrying, realising and recognising, and less often to purposeful or creative cognitions. Secondly, he found a general ambiguity as to the intentionality of the action of a verb. For example, the Yolngu word to condemn, *gulinybuma*, also means to dislike. The word for ashamed, *gora*, also means bashful. The word for forgive, *baylakarama*, also means forget or ignore. In each case the word can be used without any ascription of culpability. Christie concludes that

> this ... allows for a high level of indirectness in everyday speech - something which facilitates harmonious relationships. This ambiguity is impossible for speakers of English. From the English point of view, where specificity is more important, the Yolgnu language inhibits the speaker's ability to perceive and therefore to exercise personal control or personal responsibility over his or her behaviour. (Christie, 1984)

Several conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. Firstly, the Yolngu de-emphasis on purposefulness is deeply embedded in the language and culture. Secondly, the Yolngu language not only reflects the mode of behaviour they prefer, but also constrains them to behave and to interpret others' behaviour in certain ways. Thirdly, the Yolngu perspective on intentionality makes the individual creative knowledge-building process very difficult in the decontextualised learning setting of the classroom. Quite part from the problems Aboriginal children experience dealing with the surface features of classroom English, their own distinctive world view (which includes a particular view of what it means to know) inhibits the effective understanding of the English culture and language. English words which connote a wide range of intentional activity are unlikely to be understood by Aborigines in the same way. Rather, the Aboriginal learners of English as a foreign language will impose their Aboriginal semantic structures upon the new word and construct an individual meaning for it. For example, to a Yolngu child the English classroom command "Try!" means "Take a stab at it!" rather than "Think carefully!" This is because in Yolngu *birrka'yun* means more commonly "try to do" rather than "try to work it out". (The above two paragraphs are taken from Christie & Harris, 1985)

With those sociolinguistic matters in mind we can now go deeper into the foundations of the communication breakdown between Aborigines and Anglos and failure to understand each other's aspirations and values, by looking at some contrasting aspects of Aboriginal and Anglo world view.

The first example is that in remote Aboriginal society knowledge is owned, or looked after, by particular people. Only some people can sing some songs; only some people can publicly know some stories (though many people might know them privately); only some people can paint some designs and so on. So in Aboriginal society a lot of knowledge is personal. In contrast, in Anglo society knowledge is public and available to anyone who is smart enough, and perhaps rich enough, and willing to work hard enough to learn it. If the Western education system persuades Aboriginal people that all knowledge, no matter what culture it belongs to, should be open to anybody of any age, then it has cut away one foundation of Aboriginal society.

The second example is that in Aboriginal society people are more interested in the quality of relationships than in the quantity of things. I know both societies have some interests in both, but there is a difference in emphasis. Industrial culture thinks about millions, and fractions, and square roots and long divisions and very complicated formulae. All this spreads through the whole industrial economy. Even Anglo judgements about quality itself are based on quantity: the highest mountain, the biggest diamond, the smallest camera or the oldest culture. (To many Anglos, Aboriginal culture is valuable only because it is so many years old!) If an Anglo person is interested in another person he or she will want to know how old he is and how much money he earns every year. If Anglos like a painting they want to know much it costs, and so on. I acknowledge that some linguists have found that Aboriginal people can make their languages count up to hundreds and thousands, but that's not the point. The point is that different world views lie behind this quantity versus quality contrast, and if Aboriginal people have a lot of training in Western culture mathematics they might begin to think in a quantity way.

Another example of difference in world view is in attitudes to the physical country and its resources. The Aboriginal view of the world is that humans belong to the environment, or at least should fit in with the environment and not try to change it. Industrial society tries to change the environment; it clears land and ploughs it up; it makes irrigation systems; it breeds animals for food and sale; and it digs up oil or minerals to make more things. All this is trying to control the environment and the industrial culture's education system teaches people how to do it and to believe in it. Nearly all the types of Western science - biology, chemistry, physics and maths, are directed at controlling nature. In contrast Aborigines try mostly to leave the environment alone, and fit in with what's happening in nature. Aborigines did use fire to influence nature, and today some are in favour of mining, but it is still true that most Aborigines see the way Anglos go about harnessing natural resources as pushy, greedy and manipulative.

Another world view contrast is between the Aboriginal religious view of the world as opposed to the Western scientific view. (I know "scientific" is not quite the right word, because all cultures have a science of some kind.) This is really a matter of belief versus proof about what causes things to happen. In a religious basis for what causes things to happen, what you believe is more important than what can be fully understood. Aborigines do not encourage young people to ask why things happen - they are expected to believe the religious history of how they happened. If Aboriginal people learn a lot about industrial scientific questioning and start asking for proof for things believed inside their culture, then Aboriginal world view is undermined.

Another contrast in Aboriginal/Anglo world views is that Aboriginal society is a more closed or completed society, and industrial society is more open and incomplete. Aborigines believe that the really important events in the world have already happened (when the landscape and people were made) and that a perfectly good social system is already here. Members of industrial society are encouraged to invent new things often. Words like "progress" and "development" are common. And Anglo people hope that better social and political systems can be developed in the future too. The Anglo education system encourages students to try to improve the world and invent new ways of doing things. Of course Aboriginal society is actually changing and developing all the time too, but not in the same way that Western society does. If Aboriginal people take on Anglo attitudes towards change, invention and development, the Aboriginal world view will be challenged.

I have mentioned five contrasts in world view. My point is that these matters are more than **differences**: they are opposites: they are **incompatible**. Private ownership of knowledge is opposite to public ownership. An emphasis on quantity of things is opposite to an emphasis on quality of relationships. Controlling or changing the environment is opposite to leaving it alone, and so on. No migrant group in Australia faces such stark incompatibility with the majority society in world view. There are a number of other Aboriginal/Anglo contrasts, but what I am saying is that if these differences are not respected by education systems, and by Anglo people, and given room to live, then the smaller culture group will lose its identity over time.

I need to be clear on a couple of issues here. I am not trying to say that members of the two societies can't happily meet as (universal) humans in some contexts. And I am not saying that Aboriginal culture shouldn't change, or that Anglo and Aboriginal societies shouldn't borrow from each other. All living cultures are changing and borrowing all the time. A culture standing still is a dead culture, good only for museums. I think Aborigines must have the same choices as everyone else in this country. But, if Aborigines decide that they want to remain distinctive forever, then this talk is about some ways to help that be possible: some ways Aborigines might live with two sets of sometimes opposite values.

There are, then, a number of serious dilemmas in this Aboriginal/Anglo contact situation. One is that Aboriginal parents say they want their children to learn the 3Rs in English, and to grow up to be Aboriginal. Yet we know from the above discussion of world views that the two hopes are in some ways mutually exclusive. Think here of the sensitive Anglo teacher who knows the Aboriginal children need English and Western Maths to be self-managing in today's world, yet also thinks that if the children learn English and Western Maths very well they'll learn a lot of Western values along with them.

Well, what is a possible solution to this dilemma? I think there are two quite different levels on which we can respond.

One is on the **individual** level: individual people, individual teachers and individual programs. For example, we can try to train Anglo people generally about Aboriginal world view and rules of interpersonal communication, and *vice versa*. We can seek to train more Aboriginal teachers and work at more effective teaching methodologies and so on. But I don't believe that will ever on its own solve the dilemma.

The other level at which we need to seek solutions is on the **group or structural** level. Cultural identities are maintained by groups, not individuals. Members of minorities find their strength in group membership as well as in individual achievement. If very **small cultures** are to survive over the **long term** the major dilemmas must be faced on a group basis.

The question is, how? If Aborigines stay more inside Aboriginal culture they can be strong in Aboriginal culture, but will not be able to defend themselves in industrial society. But if Aborigines get strong in Anglo culture their Aboriginal identity could weaken. The dilemma is how to be strong in both at the same time. Aboriginal people want Anglo skills and education, yet they want to stay Aboriginal. How can this be possible? I believe the most powerful educational idea offered towards solving this dilemma is that of two-way education (and I would go further and say two-way living). The idea of two-way schooling was invented by Aborigines in about the mid 1970's. The first recorded Aboriginal statement I have come across about two way learning is by Pincher Nyurrmiyarri from Dagarugu/Wave Hill in about 1973. (McConvell, 1982) While Aborigines have invented the two-way strategy, the details of how it might apply in practice have not been fully worked out, but some Aboriginal people are beginning to work on it now. (See Yunupingu, 1985, Wunungmurra, 1988, and Poulsen, 1988. Also Yipirinya independent school in Alice Springs has made a number of statements about its two-way philosophy.)

One way to work out how two incompatible or very different world views and education systems can exist side by side at the same time is to think in terms of separated culture domains or separated social worlds. Each group's social world can be called a **domain**. I think the word "domain" is a good one. It comes from the study by sociolinguists of bilingual people, and how those who speak two languages decide when to use one language and when to use the other. To live by culture domain separation is to decide all the time what culture world you're operating in. In 1987 a Pintupi man said to a friend of mine at Papunya, John Heffernan, "It's like walking through a door". He meant that moving from one social world or domain to another was like walking through a door. If it's the Aboriginal domain or "room" you're in then you operate by Aboriginal rules. If it's the Anglo culture domain you're in then you operate by Anglo culture rules. Now I know it's not as simple as that, and I know there is overlap of topics which must be dealt with in both domains - Aboriginal land rights and Aboriginal health being two very obvious examples. But much of the time the separated domain system is a helpful way to live, and seems to be the least harmful way for someone who has to live in two cultures. I believe that both Anglos and Aborigines need a lot of practice at supporting these culture boundaries, these two social worlds of living which have psychological doors between them. And I believe it is the responsibility of education systems to help people deal with decision making about whether boundaries will help culture maintenance, and if so, how, when and where to practice them.

This idea of living in two domains is not new. Many Aboriginal people have for many years already set a pattern of domain separation. But the pattern needs to be strengthened, needs to be dignified and normalised and Anglo society needs to accept it as positive and friendly human behaviour, and a pattern which will need to last, not just for some temporary phase, but possibly forever. Remote Aborigines living on cattle stations, Government settlements and missions have always lived in two domains: from 8:00-5:00 during the working week they did Anglo culture work, operated mostly by Anglo culture rules and spoke English to English speaking people. The rest of the time back in their own domain they spoke their own languages, mostly followed their own religious practices, and lived by their own world view and systems of relationships. And members of both societies lived maybe 100 metres apart for year after year and really knew very little about each other. I am not saying this was always in the past a socially healthy arrangement, because there were sometimes also costs on both sides because the barriers were set up by poverty, racism, ignorance and dispossession. What I am talking about for the future is **voluntary** domain separation. The difference between culture domain separation and apartheid is that domain separation is **voluntary**: it increases choices rather than lessening them, and is not motivated by racism but by a freedom to be different. In any case those Aborigines who have survived have done it at least partly by domain separation.

I should also emphasise that living by culture domain separation does not mean that there is no common ground, no sharing between the two cultural groups. There can be a good deal of common ground. But the key strategy of domain separation is that the small culture has some safe places to be itself and to grow. Different cultures, especially incompatible groups, need some times and areas of privacy to be fully themselves.

What kind of social living will help people to live in two social worlds? What are those "safe places", or "safe harbours" where Aborigines can live in their own way? I am going to list eight measures that I think should be taken if Aboriginal culture is to have a safe place to continue to grow.

These measures would include the **maintenance of Aboriginal languages** still in everyday use by all generations, and the wide recognition of Kriol and Aboriginal English as distinctive Aboriginal languages; greater Aboriginal influence in the **media** so that Aboriginal children at least sometimes have more that the Western viewing option; greater **economic independence** - probably connected to land rights; Aboriginal **control of Aboriginal schools** - which includes the right to employ non-Aboriginal people where they wish; a philosophy of **social change** that accepts change as both inevitable and in itself culturally neutral; and a high level of **mastery of majority culture skills** on the part of at least some minority culture members. But, more important than all of these above are two key measures.

One key factor that helps Aborigines stay strong in their identity and world view in the Aboriginal domain is some **physical separation**. (After all, those remote Aborigines who have survived did so because they lived where it was too hot or too dry for many Anglo people to live and make money.) The homeland centre or outstation movement is a clear recent example of Aboriginal attempts at domain separation. There are now about 500 outstations in remote Australia with about 6,500 people living in them. But today new kinds of positive walls need to be built because the discovery of minerals, TV and air travel are breaking down this physical boundary protection. Land rights is one form of protection but is not enough.

The other key factor - related to the first - is that a successful culture domain separation strategy will depend on **group action**. All strategies so far mentioned depend on group action. Where individuals felt too restricted by a domain separation pattern for living they could choose not to participate. This would not matter so long as there were enough people left of all ages to maintain the viable group. The only way Aboriginal parents can hope that their children will keep their culture and identity is by membership of a group. In terms of culture maintenance, group identity is more important then individual "freedom".

One reason group action is so crucial is that individual identity - who we are - is ultimately maintained by groups. Identity formation has two parts: the person concerned must have a picture or perception about him or herself, and then that perception has **to be read back or reflected back by others** - by a group. An example would be an engineer who feels like an engineer, then is thrown into gaol where he is treated as just another convict. Within a very short time he will fell like the inmate of a gaol (See Jordan, 1985 and elsewhere). If the whole idea of culture domain separation is to help people live as happily and successfully as possible in two social worlds; to be successfully bi-cultural, then a bi-cultural Aboriginal person would need to have his or her Aboriginal identity recognised or read back to them by Aboriginal people: they would need to be accepted by the Aboriginal society as Aboriginal.

While I am saying that to survive in the long term Aboriginal people need to be able to live in two social worlds, and that each part of their bi-cultural identity needs to be read back or authenticated by Aboriginal society and Anglo society in turn, I should make it clear that the identity of a bicultural person cannot be of equal depth, or salience or commitment to both sides. I am saying that the Anglo culture domain of a two-way college or two-way school should be treated by Aborigines as a **giant role play or a huge serious game**. The question of how much from the Anglo domain will rub off into the value system of the Aboriginal students is a very real problem. But there is some evidence from studies of Western science students which shows that people can operate two thinking systems. These science students have had a very concentrated exposure to the Western, scientific way of thinking. Yet the research shows they tended to use a scientific problem solving approach to tasks at school, but outside school used problem-solving approaches they had learned at home.[3] However, I believe we should deliberately guard against how much the Western world view will rub off (although we can't help some "rubbing off"). That safeguard is presenting the Western curriculum as a giant role play, like a very big game. The role play could be put in place in the Anglo domain of schools by teachers having the attitude and saying many times in many different ways to Aboriginal students, "You are not learning this because it is better, but because this is the way you can learn to handle industrial culture." Role playing is nothing new. After all, all of us participate successfully in different activities with varying degrees of belief or commitment through carrying out roles. But the strategy of giant role play for Western things needs to be formalised for Aborigines in curriculum development and implementation.

Most small societies surrounded by a much larger society have been swallowed up. So very powerful culture maintenance strategies are needed. In the case of surviving Aboriginal groups domain separation has helped them to live so far. But with more TV, videos, travel and educational options the influence of the Western world is now intensifying rapidly. Each Aboriginal group can have its own different pattern, but in all cases great determination, willpower and creativity will be needed in the future to maintain long term strategies for culture survival.

It is not my business to suggest that Aborigines **should** remain a separate identity. But if that is what Aborigines **want** - and that seems to be the case - it is a responsibility for all of us to be aware of what is known about how some small culture groups are doing it. If Aboriginal groups want to keep a special identity they need to take determined steps about strengthening social boundaries.

I am not saying the boundaries between the domains will be the same for every group: that's for Aboriginal people to work out. But I think that in the Aboriginal culture, the speed and direction of change will be more controllable by Aboriginal people under a group domain separation strategy. The reason that some degree of physical separation and group action rather than individual action is crucial to long term minority culture maintenance is that culture cannot be directly taught: it is socialised. If we are really talking about "culture expression centres" or "culture sharing centres" or "culture doing centres" we may be contributing to culture continuity. What makes up a culture? At one end of a range of aspects of the culture are those that are more tangible, such as material objects, language, music, history, art and so on. At the other end are aspects of the culture which are less tangible such as ideas, world view, style and doing things, sense of humour, ways of behaving and believing, the meanings of different parts of life, forms of authority, and so on. And part of culture is the "right" **context** in which all these elements have an authentic **function** and where all the interrelationships between all these elements is continued.

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[3] See an extensive footnote (no 9) on this research in Harris, 1988 (b).

Let me sidetrack just for a minute about function in culture. The use of English words (with their culturally defined areas of meaning) like "art", "music", "religion", "ceremony" are the beginning of misunderstanding Aboriginal culture. For example, in Anglo society a piece of art is an object of emotional pleasure and individual creativity. In Aboriginal society art can have those values, but also a very different purpose and meaning. For example, at a land rights hearing about the closure of coastal waters near Milingimbi to non-Aboriginal fishermen several years ago, local Aboriginal artists produced paintings which depicted local creation stories which were more like a land title deed in their function than a work of art. After the case was won the Aboriginal artists apparently lost interest in those paintings, because the job for which those paintings were made was finished. Yet to Anglo eyes they were beautiful works of art which should be preserved. Or, to take another example, at a circumcision ceremony at Milingimbi a boy is painted all over with his clan totem geometric designs which represent ongoing creation. He becomes a living-ikon-of-creation-continuing. His status is changed from boy to man and a few hours later what Anglos would see as a notable work of art will be washed off in the sea or worn off in sleep. My point is that taken out of the context of its cultural job such "art" is just that: art, a Western person's idea. (In sociological terms I am talking about the dangers of reification: or trivialisation, and artificialisation or the "thingification" of culture).

In Aboriginal society all the elements of culture go together and depend on each other. Setting up compartments is impossible within Aboriginal culture without loss of meaning. Integration is the norm. For example, in white society we can talk about law, religion, land ownership and family relationships quite separately. But in Aboriginal society, to talk about any one of those, one has to talk about them all.

I could well understand if some of you by now see this domain separation line of reasoning as naive, racist or dangerous. But think about it: those Aborigines who have survived so far have done it by domain separation. And, if we think about it, all of us live to some extent in two worlds - such as home and work. Members of churches, clubs and associations to a greater or lesser degree move between two worlds. Catholic religious orders or the Salvation Army or the Masons or China Town in inner Sydney are subcultures made up of members who have free access to the larger worlds, and yet impose restricted access to their own. Families and married couples do the same. My Greek students tell me that where Greek culture is strongest in Darwin this has been achieved by a form of culture domain separation, without loss of opportunity to participate in the larger society. Why then do these arrangements not worry us - why are these not naive, elitist or even dangerous? Partly because members of these groupings participate easily and fully in the majority society when they wish, partly because they cannot so easily be identified by colour, and partly because the boundaries are clear-cut and both insiders and outsiders readily recognise what social domain they are in at any one time.

This recognising whose "world" we are in at any one time is not the case with some aspects of Aboriginal/Anglo contact. For example, who's culture domain is the school in an Aboriginal community? (My answer - following Aboriginal hints is that it's both - two-ways - but that we haven't been bold enough to ask Aboriginal people to define clearly which part is which within each school). Or, for example, when an Anglo teacher is walking along a road in an Aboriginal community who's domain is he on? Or when Aboriginal children visit an Anglo teacher in her home, which set of cultural rules should operate? Or when Aboriginal people walk into a Translating and Interpreting Conference in Darwin 30 minutes late, dressed in singlets, shorts and thongs, who's cultural domain are they in - by what rules should they operate? Different dress codes are important in different contexts in Western society. When Aborigines learned English did they have an opportunity to learn that? Or when 20-30 Aborigines sit on the concrete outside the Stuart Park shops and some non-Aborigines are afraid to go past them into the shops, or are embarrassed by being asked for "Two-dollars to buy some smokes brother," does it matter? Are these trivial events? Do these examples portray people from two cultural groups who know which culture-ground they're on at any particular time?

Before concluding, seeing that the theme of this conference includes professional training I think I should say something about that. If it is true that Aboriginal and Anglo world views are so different that the most peaceful and effective model of living together with Aboriginal identity surviving in the long term, is through culture domain separation, then we should begin by accepting such practice as both natural and socially constructive.

One of the most comparable and inspiring overseas examples of domain living today (and admittedly such examples are rare) is that of the Pueblo Indians. The Pueblos, a very small ethnic minority, were invaded by the Spanish along the Rio Grande valley (in what is now New Mexico) in 1598, nearly 400 years ago, and they have kept their culture by strict domain separation. They live in their own villages or mud forts; they discourage marriage outside the group; they use their own language in their own ceremonies; they ask anyone who takes on a new religion to live outside the village; they grow a lot of their own food; they try to keep their own traditional land and control their own schools and they encourage some young people to go to University and learn Western skills. They are not considered anti-social by the majority society, but as good citizens. They fulfill their national obligations; live mostly in peace with the majority society, do military service when necessary, and pay taxes. The majority society there accepts this arrangement as natural and normal.

The beginning point for us in Australia if we want to improve communication at deeper levels with Aborigines is that Anglo society should accept such separate living arrangements for those Aborigines who want it as normal and natural and socially constructive too.

Beyond that I think a number of steps follow. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teacher training should include learning about the philosophy of culture domain separation - so that teachers readily learn to think in terms of whose social ground they are on at any one time. Of course the definition of what constitutes each domain in schools will vary from community to community and that definition should be up to local Aboriginal people.

The next step would be one of curriculum development for two quite different domains. First, the Anglo domain curriculum should be controlled by Aborigines and taught by Anglos or Aborigines depending on who is available and what parents want. It should be designed around those aspects of Anglo society in which Aborigines want expertise and empowerment. This would include at the very least English taught as something like "Applied Western Cultural Studies" and Maths taught with an understanding of the environment-dominating value system that lies behind all Western mathematics and science. English parts of schools need to be seen as English culture learning centres - giant role plays of the Anglo world. Western society must be demystified: mysteries of this dimension are disempowering. The Anglo domain of Aboriginal schools should as far as practicable be microcosms of Anglo society: language, cultural knowledge, manners, punctuality and so on. Aspects of Western education such as what we call "critical thinking" perhaps should not be taught as a universally good way to think, but as a feature of the Western domain. Critical thinking taught simply as normal schooling becomes part of a hidden curriculum unwittingly widening any generation gap and undermining Aboriginal ways of thinking and problem solving. The actual methodologies for teaching such as reading, writing and maths should initially be modified to suit Aboriginal preferred ways of working and expectations about learning, but by the end of primary school those Aboriginal children whose parents wish them to go on to high school (either at home or away) should be comfortable with the highly verbal styles of teaching and learning of the Western sub-culture that is typical schooling. It is crucial that all the Western domain be seen consciously by Aboriginal learners as a giant role play. This will decrease the dangers of a Western hidden curriculum. I don't believe a consciously learned, explicitly taught approach to the Anglo curriculum, especially when mediated by the giant role play, is anywhere near the assimilationist danger that an orthodox approach to teaching is. The latter allows a large hidden curriculum because it does not deliberately uncover the value-laden nature of Western school knowledge.

The other and simultaneous step would be in relation to the Aboriginal domain of two-way school. Aboriginal people need scope in developing an educational philosophy about the Aboriginal domain of educational institutions. If they decide that Aboriginal education belongs outside school, then that is one legitimate option. Here again we need a strong theory of context and function. But assuming local Aboriginal people did see some aspects of Aboriginal domain education as belonging in the school, the Aboriginal domain would be designed and taught by

Aboriginal people, using Aboriginal criteria for what constituted satisfactory learning, and for what constitutes an Aboriginal administration style. The purposes, functions, contexts, ways of doing things and reasons for doing things would need to be Aboriginal - perhaps changing - but nevertheless Aboriginal. Otherwise the Aboriginal domain of a school would be window-dressing and ultimately not an agent of culture maintenance. This domain of contemporary Aboriginal education might sometimes be inside educational buildings but often outside. Timetabling would need to be very different to allow large chunks of time to be devoted to both Aboriginal and Western domain activities separately - possibly a week or two at a time.

But these are details: the main issue is to get a vision for the potential of two-way education in response to the special circumstances of the 1-2% indigenous population, and then the practicalities will be argued through over time. Only Aborigines can design an Aboriginal two-way school or college department: it must be of their choosing; not ours. It is the task of non-Aborigines in this context to support and offer special skills - not to lead. Only Aborigines can establish two-way schools, because to be effective aids to Aboriginal culture maintenance, they need to be **Aboriginal** two-way schools.

In conclusion I feel obliged to say that while many Aborigines - at least in the N.T. - support the idea of two-way schooling, only a few are yet actively implementing it. This may be because they need many more well trained Aboriginal teachers before communities will have the confidence to assert themselves more in schools. And when they do there will be many different models of two-way schooling. In any case, I believe that remote Aboriginal aspirations about two-way schooling are real and because non-Aboriginal people are an unavoidable part of the bicultural social situation, it is important that non-Aborigines clarify their thinking about these issues. If we don't, schools in Aboriginal communities - where they are working - will continue to be one of the strongest forces on Aboriginal people towards assimilation.

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Reading 2C

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Forget the phoney war in Australia about literacy standards. The truth is Australians may have achieved small gains in literacy levels in recent generations, or at worst remained static.

The real war underway in classrooms is between factions of linguists and educators fighting to control the literacy agenda. In this war functional grammar, traditional grammar and phonics are pitted against whole language, the method of literacy teaching that has dominated Australian curriculums for the past generation.

Because it is derived from the theories of the American linguist, Noam Chomsky, supporters of whole language are known as Chomskyists. The most bitter struggle in the literacy war is between the Chomskyists on the one hand and the functional grammar faction, known as genrists, on the other. Genrists talk about Chomskyists as enemies, while Chomskyists refer to genrists as intolerant, doctrinaire and dangerous.

Chairman of the Australian Language and Literacy Council, Rodney Cavalier, a former education minister in the Wran government in NSW, long-time member of the Labor Left and no stranger to factional bloodshed, raised the vicious character of the literacy war in a recent speech to the Council of Adult Education. Cavalier told the council the divisions in the literacy movement astonished even an old warrior familiar with the factional intensity of the NSW ALP.

The backdrop to the literacy war is Australia's push to join the growth economies of South-East Asia, the literacy demands of the new workplace in our restructured industries and the speed of technological change. While some academics refute a connection between increases in literacy rates and economic growth, few experts dispute that today's children will need to be highly literate to survive in the future workforce and to participate effectively in the democratic process.

As estimated 10 to 20 per cent of Australia's children have literacy problems on finishing primary school. The official estimate for the number of adults with low literacy is around 1 million, or one in every 10, half of them Australian-born. This figure is based on a sample of 1496 people surveyed in 1989 by literacy expert Rosie Wickert of the University of Technology, Sydney. According to an ACTU study, Australian industry loses up to $6.5 billion a year in productivity due to low literacy, but there is no way to verify this finding.

The whole language method of teaching literacy swept traditional grammar out of schools in Australia in the early 1970s when the national mood supported freeing up the classroom. The basis of whole language is the idea that children learn to read and write in the same way they learn to talk. Instead of old-fashioned phonics – drilling letters and words in isolation – whole language teachers emphasise meaning, building up knowledge of language by concentrating on topics and using 'real' books instead of readers. Creative expression is encouraged through a writing system known as process writing, some critics say with too little emphasis given to structure, sense and spelling. Other critics go further, arguing neglect of grammar in the whole language model has produced a generation of children who do not know how to talk about their language.

In the same way it swept away traditional grammar, whole language is now being pushed aside by functional grammar, a system of teaching the structure of language by analysing and practising different kinds of texts, each defined as serving a particular social purpose or function. The term genrist is used to describe members of the functional grammar faction because they refer to the various types of texts as genres. We are not talking about the kind of grammar baby-boomers learned at school. A noun is no longer a noun, but a participator. A verb is a process, adverbs and adjectives are dubbed modifiers, while a prepositional phrase such as 'at the beach' is a circumstance.

The literacy war can be perplexing for parents. Our seven-year-old son learned to read and write during two years in a whole language classroom in Canberra. His spelling is not perfect, but he is improving. His handwriting is well formed and he is an independent reader, dipping into books about science, space and nature, as well as fiction. As an observer I was impressed by the fun Alex had in class, and by the way in which his teacher developed his curiosity by connecting language learning to topics that interest kids, such as dinosaurs and dragonflies. Not once during his kindergarten year did he say he would rather stay at home. All I could remember of my own first year of school was learning to tie shoelaces. Now we have moved to Sydney I have discovered that in NSW whole language is regarded as a kind of contagious disease, and functional grammar is all the rage.

Despite its leper status in some quarters, whole language seems 'to have served most students well' according to The Literacy Challenge, a major federal parliamentary report issued last year. It has not been successful, however, says the report, for all children, and particularly for those from a weak literacy background.

Australia is not alone in experiencing a literacy war. In the United States, where literacy rates are said to have declined quantifiably, the phonics lobby is involved in a struggle with whole language. In the United Kingdom, functional grammar is making inroads into the present system, which is sympathetic to the whole language approach.

One phonics advocate in the literacy war, Susan Moore of the Institute of Public Affairs, claims the whole language approach has been a disaster. According to Moore it is a national disgrace that '10 and 11-year-olds cannot break words into syllables because they lack the basic phonic skill. Phonics has been a dirty word in schools for a long time. I know of teachers who hide their phonics materials because it is such a dirty word.' If there is no evidence of a decline in literacy standards among children in Australia, Moore believes it is only because we do not test the right things.

Victorian educationist, children's author and whole language supporter, Lorraine Wilson, is not amused. As a panellist alongside Moore at the Great Literacy Debate, a recent event organised by the Australian Book Publishers Association, a dour Wilson bitterly defended whole language. 'I'm sick of reading in newspapers that whole language teachers don't teach phonics. Whole language teachers do teach phonics, but they teach it differently, from known words and their different sounds. Whole language is not look-saying or whole-word. The kids I see in whole language classrooms love books and reading.' Wilson argued persuasively that if children are taught to recite phonetic vowel sounds, such as the short 'o' in dog, then they have to 'unlearn' the sound when they come to words like women, cold and blood. Said one linguist, 'vowels and diphthongs in English are basically crazy. You are much better off teaching children to memorise the pronunciation of individual words.'

If anything has been learned from the research on teaching literacy skills, says The Literacy Challenge, it should be that it would be arrogant to assume all the answers are known. 'It would also be misguided to assume the evidence points to a single model of learning or teaching, or that one model will necessarily be appropriate at all developmental levels or for all children,' the report says. This is not the thinking that guides the current literacy debate in Australia.

Dr Jim Martin, associate professor of linguistics at the University of Sydney and a leading warrior in the functional grammar faction, does not mince words. 'Whole language cannot raise its face in professional organisations. Its time is over', he said in a recent conversation. 'It is not good enough for 11 per cent of students to go through childhood not learning to read or write. We need a quantum leap forward. If our students are to make their way in a new economic order based on flexible reposes … then reading and writing will be their most important skill.'

Martin … attacks whole language as elitist because of its emphasis on story writing over factual writing. An important aim of functional grammar, he says, is to 'empower' those most likely to fall through the literacy net – migrants and kids from low-income households – with the tools of language.

In its most recent strategic victory in the literacy war the functional grammar faction captured the NSW Board of Studies. The result is a new K–6 English syllabus introduced into NSW primary schools this year. The model has been taught in Queensland for some time, and the Northern Territory and Western Australia have adopted parts of it in their curriculums. In Victoria, the latest battlefield, the functional grammar charge is being led by Professor Frances Christie, newly appointed professor of language and literacy at Melbourne University and with a seat on Victoria's Board of Studies. Victorian Chomskyists are resisting the attack in early skirmishes in Melbourne.

Functional grammar has also captured a significant portion of the adult literacy market, with the Adult Migrant Education Service adopting the model for its English language courses.

In NSW the new primary syllabus has been hailed by many as a return to grammar. Numerous linguists and educationists from other factions (and especially Chomskyists), however, continue to question the likelihood of functional grammar succeeding in the classroom. Functional grammar, they claim, is misguided, inappropriate and even dangerous as a sole method of teaching literacy. They say its proponents behave like members of a religious cult, or 'pseudo-intellectual fundamentalists', that much of the language of functional grammar is 'pretentious nonsense', and that politicians are jumping on the genre bandwagon as a simple solution to the clamour for a return to teaching the basics.

Australia is the world centre for functional grammar. Michael Halliday, a British linguist appointed as the foundation professor of linguistics at the University of Sydney in 1975, developed this system of literacy learning in opposition to Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar. While transformational grammar stressed the importance of form as the key to language, Halliday stressed function.

This difference in focus on form or function, or Halliday versus Chomsky, is the crux of the literacy war.

As Halliday's protege, Martin, along with colleagues including Dr Joan Rothery, currently of Sydney University's Centre for Continuing Education, extended Halliday's ideas on function, building on the theory of using genre in literacy teaching.

Genre may be an ideal political solution, but it is not an ideal educational one, says Malcolm Johnson, second-language acquisition researcher and language teacher, and an experienced teacher trainer. 'The genrists are dangerous because they believe they have all the answers,' says Johnson, who places himself within the borders of the Chomsky camp. 'Their claim that [teaching genre] will accelerate language acquisition is wrong. Genre is a buzz word and a lot of the language of genre is pretentious rubbish. The philosophy behind genre is that you can characterise language in the way it is used … that language function and use account for the forms language takes. For the genrists functions are all and forms are nothing. But the empirical evidence is that people learn forms in language acquisition long before target functions. Saying that if you teach the target functions the forms will follow is like saying objects have no mass. It's against all empirical observation.'

To illustrate the potential benefits of functional grammar, genrists point to Tempe Language High School, an inner-Sydney secondary school where 83 per cent of students come from non-English speaking backgrounds. The subject of a recently screened SBS television documentary, *School of Babel*, Tempe High has experienced a dramatic improvement in its English results following the introduction of a functional grammar program, Write it Right, across the curriculum several years ago …

Tempe principal Peter James was appointed to head the school in 1988. At the time he despaired at the cynical attitude of some staff that they were training pupils to be illiterate in two languages. Before his arrival Tempe's final year students sat for the lowest level of English available. By 1992 the school was offering English instruction at all levels and scored just below the State average in the HSC – a significant achievement for a school where kids were once regarded as beyond teaching …

The problem for genrists in claiming success at Tempe is that functional grammar is only one prong of a dual strategy James adopted. The other involves boosting students' self-esteem and confidence by promoting the value of being bi-lingual. Students are encouraged to become literate in their first language … to boost their English literacy. James' aim is to 'beat the system, to break the poverty cycle' for kids who come for the most part from the bottom of the economic pile. 'I am aggressively on about empowerment,' he says. Interestingly, it is the teenagers from non-English speaking backgrounds who have shown most improvement under the new system.

The link between a person's literacy in their first language and success in attaining literacy in a second is well founded in research, according to Wayne Sawyer, a lecturer in education at the University of Western Sydney. Claims of a link between functional grammar and accelerated language learning have less basis , he says, because 'there is no research showing this.' A whole language proponent, Sawyer describes the new primary English syllabus in NSW as a 'brave experiment … Genrists say that it will work wonders, but the research just isn't there. My main concern about functional grammar is that there is very good evidence that there is no link between a conscious knowledge of grammar and an ability to write. Researchers have found the kind of grammar used – traditional, functional or transformational – does not make any difference, but the findings of these studies are being ignored.'

There are a great many valid ways to describe how language is learned, according to an Australian literacy expert who asked not to be named. He says, 'I'm extremely uncomfortable about the narrow, polemic nature of the genrists. Some genrists are like thought police, with no sense of give or take or pluralism. A really good teacher combines and draws on knowledge to suit the particular kids. The systemic linguists have a noble position – empowering minorities and working-class kids – but genre concepts are too narrow. I would not teach kids about language as if there was one way and only one way.'

A consistent criticism of functional grammar is that it is overly prescriptive, that defining for children the writing styles they should use for different social purposes is too much like social engineering. Genrists, for example, are considering introducing the language of teams into schools, because teamwork is an important part of the new, restructured workplace. Underlying this criticism is the wider philosophical dilemma of whether we want schools to act as process lines delivering citizens ready-made for the workforce, or to produce culturally literate, well-rounded individuals. Wickert, in her report, *No Single Measure*, frames the question this way: 'Should schools be concentrating their resources on training children to be able to perform 'functional' literacy tasks as adults or should they be in the business of providing a broad general education?'

Proponents of functional grammar do not accept the two are mutually exclusive. Says Rothery: 'The prescriptive argument is a middle-class cop-out. If your parents are shift workers or you are Vietnamese and live at the back of a shop you are not going to have much to write about.' Asked what sort of citizens schools should aim for, Rothery says: 'We want people who are able to make the widest range of choices possible. We want people who are well rounded in their education and also able to participate in community affairs and issues.' Functional grammar is the best approach to achieve this end, she says, arguing it is a critical literacy which does not take the printed word for granted, but instead helps children understand that its organisation is socially constructed.

In a published defence of genre, Martin, Rothery and Christie pose the question, 'What is freedom? Is a progressive, process-writing classroom really free? … Will genres, if taught, imprison children?' According to the trio, studies in the Northern Territory and in urban Sydney have found similarly that children have a severely limited repertoire of subject matter and writing styles. 'What kind of freedom is that?' they ask. 'If teachers do not provide choices for children, many do not have the choices to take up … Writers cannot take up options they do not have.'

The linguistic warriors have got it all mixed up says Gary Crew, the Brisbane-based award-winning author of books for children and young adults. The point they are missing, says Crew, is that the hub of the issue is not whether literacy is declining or increasing, but that it is changing. According to Crew, a former secondary English teacher, increased school retention rates mean teachers' clientele has changed. At the same time schools have remained the same, and continue to identify literacy with literature. Works like Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* remain on the syllabus, says Crew, but many kids no longer find them relevant. 'These children have systems of communication that are just as sophisticated as *Jude the Obscure*, but different. My son, for instance, hates great literature, but devours golfing magazines, and can make my computer smoke,' he says.

The real literacy crisis, according to Crew, also a panellist at the Great Literacy Debate, is that Australia idolises sporting heroes and brutishness at the expense of the intellectual role model. 'If you can kick, push, whack or bump, people think you're God. As long as you can grunt and root, hey, you're out there. It's a national disease. We need an elevation in the public eye of scientists, engineers, writers and artists.' Crew is also concerned that the education system is skewed in favour of girls. Programs helping girls with maths and science are in place, but where, he asks, are the language programs designed to aid boys, who most often suffer from literacy problems?

A talented primary school teacher in the NSW system whose views I respect sums up her feelings about the debate: 'You don't ever toss out anything. I like the new English syllabus because it provides structure and awareness of different situations. [But] I get angry when I read criticism of whole language. Phonics was never thrown out [under whole language], but it was not taught in isolation. We need a range of methods in the classroom to cater to the needs of all the individual children. It's a sad debate – the total belief that one way is the right one.'

Reading 2D

Cope B. & Kalantzis M. (eds) (1993) *The Powers of Literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing*. The Falmer Press, London, pp. 1–21.

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Introduction: How a Genre Approach to Literacy Can Transform the Way Writing Is Taught

Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis

A genre approach to literacy teaching involves being explicit about the way language works to make meaning. It means engaging students in the role of apprentice with the teacher in the role of expert on language system and function. It means an emphasis on content, on structure and on sequence in the steps that a learner goes through to become literate in a formal educational setting. It means a new role for textbooks in literacy learning. It means teaching grammar again.

At first sight, these generalisations about genre literacy teaching sound decidedly old-fashioned. In fact, in some respects they sound rather like one of the regular clarion calls we hear from the 'back to basics' movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. In its strongest, most creative and most exciting moments, genre literacy teaching represents a fundamentally new educational paradigm. It is based on an understanding of the nature of language quite different from that of traditional grammar. Not only does it move beyond traditional literacy pedagogies which stress formal correctness; it also goes beyond the process pedagogies which stress 'natural' learning through 'doing' writing. Genre literacy teaching is not liberal progressivism. Nor is it part of a movement 'back to basics'. Genre literacy is attempting to create a new pedagogical space.

This book documents an educational experiment that began in Sydney, Australia. Although the results of this experiment, we believe, are of international significance, the development of genre literacy needs to be explained in the first instance in terms of the politics and sociology of Australian education. In a nutshell, traditional curriculum was officially abandoned in Australia in the 1970s. There seemed to be very good educational reasons for this at the time — reasons that are still as strong today as they were then. Yet by the 1980s it was clear that the new progressivist curriculum was not producing the goods. It was not producing any noticeable improvement in patterns of educational attainment. In fact, all it seemed to do was make teachers' jobs harder. Despite the official paradigm shift, in practice many teachers found it more comfortable to stay with their old ways of teaching.

This is why the genre-based approach to literacy has been the subject of an extraordinary wave of interest in Australia, particularly over the last five years.

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Teachers know a fresh approach is needed. And now that the genre-based approach to literacy has become well established in Australia, the interest is steadily spreading further afield — to North America, Britain, Scandinavia, Israel. Yet many people still have their reservations. The liberal progressivists claim that genre literacy entails a revival of transmission pedagogy. It seems to mean learning formal 'language facts' again. It is sometimes claimed that genre literacy teaching is founded on a pedagogy that will lead us back to the bad old days of authoritarian classrooms where some students found the authority congenial, and they succeeded, while other students found the authority uncongenial, and they failed. Conservative educators, on the other hand, are suspicious of the claims of genre literacy to be a strategy for equity in education, to give social groups historically marginalised in one way or another better access to social mobility through education. Is this a threat to standards, to the status of the Western canon with its great books, to the notion of elite curriculum for elite social and cultural responsibility?

If the debate around genre is a vibrant one — as the genre theorists line up against the external bastions of traditional or progressivist pedagogies — the debate within the genre school is at times even more heated. Among the proponents of genre as a matter of principle, differing views emerge on the nature of language and on viable or worthwhile pedagogy. The protagonists in the discussions within the genre school at various times label each other, according to their purported inclinations, traditional pedagogues or progressivist pedagogues. Nor do they all have the same theory of language informing their work, including even the definition of 'genre' itself. To be faithful to the intellectual dynamism in the debate, this book attempts to reflect the diversity in the argument about genre literacy teaching in Australia. As the idea of genre spreads, this is increasingly an international debate, too. Accordingly, we do not attempt to present a unified account of genre in literacy learning. The authors who have contributed to this volume only agree on the concept of genre in principle. They agree on the pedagogical project of genre literacy learning.

For all the authors of this book, genre is a category that describes the relation of the social purpose of text to language structure. It follows that in learning literacy, students need to analyse critically the different social purposes that inform patterns of regularity in language — the whys and the hows of textual conventionality, in other words. Beyond this the book deliberately sets out to represent a variety of different theories which attempt to describe what is in genre and how genre literacy pedagogy might be realised most effectively.

In the overall scheme of the book the purpose of this chapter is to introduce the basic principles of genre literacy teaching to educators. It discusses the educational dilemmas that genre literacy has set out to address. It also discusses the educational experiments that members of the genre school have mounted in an attempt to tackle these dilemmas, in which the concept of genre has frequently proved very helpful. The chapter then discusses some of the key debates within the genre school — moments of self-doubt, self-reflection and dissension which confirm our belief that this is a dynamic movement. It is a movement which, although based on some fundamental shared assumptions about language and education, has the positive potential to mean many things to many people and to enrich different people's educational practices and understandings in different ways. It is hoped that this book will have a similar effect.

The Context: Why a New Approach to Literacy?

The question 'Why a new approach to literacy?' is the subject of Chapter 2. To answer it, we need to take two steps back. These are simultaneously historical steps and theoretical steps in the story of literacy pedagogy — crucial steps, nevertheless, if we are to put in context the essential problems the genre school set out to address. These two critical steps we will call traditional curriculum and progressivist curriculum.

Traditional curriculum, as much as the progressivist curriculum, is an invention of modernity. Yet ironically — even deceptively — traditional curriculum has pretensions to timelessness, as a curriculum which is based on the solidity of the classics. Traditional literacy teaching forged itself this link to the high culture of classical Greece and Rome by constructing what was ostensibly a universal 'traditional grammar' out of descriptions of Latin and Ancient Greek. Latin and Greek, in fact, were the main subjects in early modern education. Traditional grammar does, indeed, have some value in describing highly inflected and relatively regular languages like Latin or Greek. Applied to modern languages such as English, however, it simply does not work very well.

So why did traditional grammar become a critical element in literacy pedagogy from the beginnings of the Enlightenment in the sixteenth century right through the revolutionary universalisation of mass education in the nineteenth century and well beyond the decline of Latin and Greek as school subjects in the second half of the twentieth century? The answer to this question lies in the real modernity of traditional grammar. Traditional grammar is based on a uniquely modern logicoscientific culture and epistemology. It is based on the idea that the world can be described in terms of 'facts', rules and regularities epitomised in tables to conjugate verbs or decline nouns. Language, it seems, is something that can be meaningfully visualised in taxonomies and rationalised into tables arranged across the two-dimensional space of the textbook page. Nothing could be further from the classical pedagogy of historical reality in which grammar could never have been visualised in this way. In ancient Greece and Rome grammar was a social practice integrally related to dialectic or rhetoric and learnt in apprenticeship to masters of those arts.

The method in the apparent madness of traditional grammar was in teaching the epistemic culture and logic of modernity. Most immediately, it taught a certain way of transcribing reality. Yes, conservative educators are right: even learning Latin was not for its own sake; it was neither totally irrelevant nor completely mindless, as the progressivists would like us to believe. Teaching Latin the modern way, you also taught a certain sort of thinking. Applying traditional grammar to the teaching of English, the role of literacy learning acquired the same sort of social mission. By teaching parts of speech, by demanding standards of correctness, by being prescriptive about what were ostensibly language facts, teachers were teaching students respect, discipline, order. Transmission pedagogy and rote learning were the cultural artefacts of classrooms whose microenvironments anticipated the disciplined order of the modern world. This was the serious business of traditional grammar. This was its moral economy.

There was also its superficial business: don't split infinitives; say 'she did it' instead of 'she done it'; say 'isn't' instead of 'ain't'. Sometimes these sorts of rules were simply a waste of time, or even themselves embarrassingly 'incorrect' for many social contexts. There is a time and a place for many of the usages that traditional grammar deemed incorrect. Yet even in its most superficial moments of pedantry, traditional grammar had a social function, and that was to exclude, to mark as wrong and even to fail discourses that the school curriculum labelled incorrect — incorrect, that is, by the criteria of the self-appointed 'standard English' of the middle class. The logic of traditional curriculum was to serve up a universal 'standard', with pretensions to factualness and cultural universality, pass those who found the standard and its underlying cultural logic congenial, fail those who didn't, and then ascribe the consequent differences in social and educational outcome to individual 'ability' (Chapter 2).

Much the same generalisations can be made about that other element of traditional literacy curriculum: what is considered 'literary'; what deserves a place in the 'canon' and what might be considered a model of 'good' writing. In early modern curriculum the canon consisted of the classics of ancient Greece and Rome. With the rise of mass institutionalised education in vernacular languages, the canon was broadened to include modern 'classics', but under the pretence that there is a continuous Western tradition, superior to others. Again, the student's relation to the canon was to be one of uncomplaining ingestion, even if the canon bore a more familiar relation to the lived experience of some students than it did to others. If the canon did not 'work' for you, with all its gender, ethnic and class biases, you would probably fail (Cope and Kalantzis, 1992).

By the 1970s, many Australian educators were rejecting traditional literacy pedagogy, with its traditional grammar and literary canon. But the critique was from the point of view of a paradigm of progressivism that was emerging to official and institutional dominance in education. Belatedly perhaps, Australian progressivism as it flowered in the 1970s was founded on the critiques of traditional curriculum initiated by Dewey and Montessori at the turn of the twentieth century. The ensuing pedagogical revolution was nothing if not thorough, or at least it would seem to be that if one were to take the official proclamations of educational administrations at their word. Hardly a departmental syllabus remained that was not radically transformed by progressivist pedagogy. In literacy, for example, grammar and other aspects of the teaching of language through formal conventions were out — replaced by 'process writing' and 'whole language'. Nowhere in the world was the transformation in literacy pedagogy so radical, officially and on paper, if not always so thoroughly in classroom reality (NSW Department of School Education, 1987; Kalantzis and Cope, 1988b).

Following Dewey, students were now to be active learners, to learn by doing, to learn through practical experience rather than learn facts by rote. Learning was to be meaningful rather than formal. The most effective learning, it was assumed, would take place when it was relevant to the individual rather than institutionally imposed. Curriculum was to stress process over content. Textbooks which, in their nature, seemed to dictate content, were definitely out. Drawing directly on key American theorists — whose views enjoyed, incidentally, a much wider official and professional acceptance in Australia than they ever did in their homeland — a new pedagogical regime of 'whole language' and 'process writing' was based on an analogy drawn between the way children learn oral language and learn literacy at school (Graves, 1983; Goodman, 1986). Authentic resources, things that students wanted to read and write and which were of relevance and interest to their own lives, would be used instead of textbooks. The focus of the writing curriculum would no longer be on language in the abstract but on the meaning the child wanted to communicate.

Central to this literacy pedagogy was individual student motivation instead of the rule driven authoritarianism of traditional literacy teaching. The theory even went so far as to posit a concept of ownership; student texts were owned by their writers, and the teacher was no more than a resource assisting the student when called upon, a facilitator rather than the font of fixed knowledge about language, knowledge that had once been inscribed in the rules of school grammar. Student experience and communicative intent would now be brought to the fore rather than language facts and the rules of 'correct' speaking or writing. As there could be no 'proper language', there could also be no 'disadvantaged' student.

By the early 1990s, progressivist pedagogy has developed well beyond Dewey's avowed cultural and linguistic assimilationism and his notion that experiential literacy learning should always end with students learning standard English (Dewey, 1916). In fact, it has moved towards a relativistic theory of cultural and linguistic pluralism. This can be found in new institutional practices (principles of curriculum diversification and school or teacher-based curriculum), in the theories of literacy mentioned above, and, most recently, in 'postmodern' and 'poststructuralist' theories of education (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991; Ellsworth, 1989). The key term in this latest version of progressivism is 'difference'. There is no superior Western canon any more, only different literary and cultural traditions. Just as there is no longer thought to be a singular, universal, canonical knowledge, there can be no fixed language facts, only language and dialect variation that is relative to different cultural needs and interests. The notion that there might be a 'standard' of correct English was only ever sheer prejudice, it is argued. Central to this new vision of literacy is the concept of student 'voice'. The teacher is no more than a facilitator who gives students space to voice their own interests in their own discourse. In some very revealing ways, the concept of voice is where the low theories of process writing and whole language meet the high theories of postmodernism and poststructuralism (Chapter 2).

In Australia the 'back to basics' people have shouted in protest at the way teaching has changed with the rise to official favour of progressivism, and the media have conveniently often heard their call. 'Confronted daily with glaring examples of poor spelling and grammar, the language purists are targeting "lefty-trendy" teaching methods, as well as a lack of funding, in their fight for reform. . . . Good news. Schools are swinging back to the old values: grammar is on the agenda again.' This indicates the tone of the cover story of *The Bulletin/Newsweek* on 19 November 1991. In the United States the debate about 'political correctness' has led to a classical revivalism of sorts, in an attempt to meet the alleged onslaught of feminism, multiculturalism and the like — movements which supposedly threaten the educational place of the Western canon (Cope and Kalantzis, 1992). E.D. Hirsch is one of the more vocal members of this movement, and particularly influential in the debate about elementary and secondary schooling. By the end of elementary school, Hirsch spells out in his *First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, every student should know about Jekyll and Hyde, Julius Caesar, King Arthur and Rudyard Kipling, to take a random page from the list that makes up the 'Literature' section of the book. The 'English' section takes us squarely back to rules of correct usage: 'abbreviation, adjective, adverb, agreement. . . .' (Hirsch, 1988). Traditional curriculum, in other words, is very much alive and well, as is clearly evident in its vociferous protests against progressivism.

Far from being part of the 'back to basics' movement, genre literacy teaching objects equally strongly to both traditional and progressivist pedagogy. So, taking the progressivist critique of traditional curriculum as given, the task remains to analyse critically the principles and practice of progressivist pedagogy and show how it fails for a number of reasons. First, it should be exposed as culture bound, not open. The progressivist mould with its prescriptions for individual control, student-centred learning, student motivation, purposeful writing, individual ownership, the power of voice matches the moral temper and cultural aspirations of middle-class children from child-centred households. Second, its pedagogy of immersion 'naturally' favours students whose voice is closest to the literate culture of power in industrial society. Third, it is no more motivating than traditional curriculum, particularly for students who do not see the immediate point of learning literacy or even like school. Fourth, it simply reproduces educational inequities, given the inequities in the social value placed on 'different' voices in the world outside school. Fifth, far from elevating teachers to the role of professional, it reduces them to the role of manager. Sixth, progressivism often ends up fragmented, eclectic photocopier curriculum, where, to give content to the curriculum, the teacher brings in photocopies, often from old textbooks cast in the most traditional pedagogical mould. Seventh, and finally, the analogy of orality and literacy in the process writing and whole language approaches to literacy simply does not work. Orality and literacy could hardly be more different, not only in their discursive structures but in the different nature of the learning process that is involved. 'Natural' literacy learning is simply an inefficient use of time and resources. It leads to a pedagogy which encourages students to produce texts in a limited range of written genres, mostly personalised recounts. This is why the texts generated in the process writing classroom ('choose your own topic'; 'say what you feel like saying') often end up monotonous and repetitive. Worse, the most powerful written genres are those generically and grammatically most distant from orality — for example, scientific reports which attempt to objectify the world, or arguments which are especially designed to persuade.

From the point of view of the genre theorists, these are the theoretical reasons why the pedagogical regime of progressivism has failed in practice. Despite the revolutionary overturn of traditional pedagogy in Australian education systems, there is no evidence to suggest that the change brought about any improvement in opportunities for those students traditionally marginalised in school. This is why, practically, so many people have found genre literacy teaching such an attractive alternative. It is precisely why genre literacy is regarded with so much hostility by the protagonists of the progressivist as well as the traditional curriculum. In the fray, both these protagonists cast genre literacy teaching on the side of the enemy. The progressivists say the genre theorists, by teaching a new set of 'language facts', advocate a transmission pedagogy in the mould of the traditional curriculum. The traditionalists distrust the way the genre theorists lean towards a concern for cultural differences and insist that schools should attempt to achieve equitable outcomes. All these accusations are based on ignorance of what genre theorists are really saying, for, as this book will show, the objections of genre theorists to progressivism and to a revived traditional curriculum are, in fact, equally strong.

Genre in Literacy Pedagogy

'Genre' is a term used in literacy pedagogy to connect the different forms text take with variations in social purpose. Texts are different because they do different things. So, any literacy pedagogy has to be concerned, not just with the formalities of how texts work, but also with the living social reality of texts-in-use. How a text works is a function of what it is for. Let's say an adolescent's interest is in fat wheels for cars. If they want to explain to someone how to fit fat wheels onto their car, they will tell them how to handle the wheels, what to do first to fit them on, what to do next and so on. If they want to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of fat wheels with their peers, they can raise various points for and against and assess the relative merits of the opposing views. If they want to argue with their parent why they want to buy fat wheels for their car, then their arguments will be arranged in such a way that they have the best chance of convincing (Kalantzis and Wignell, 1988). As text structures — grammatically in other words — these three oral texts will inevitably be very different from each other, and we can account for the differences in terms of the social purpose of each text. Explaining, discussing and arguing each involves the generation of a type of text structure peculiar to that social process. The reasons for the textual differences can be located in the social purpose of each text.

Genres are social processes. Texts are patterned in reasonably predictable ways according to patterns of social interaction in a particular culture. Social patterning and textual patterning meet as genres. Genres are textual interventions in society; and society itself would be nothing without language in all its patterned predictability. It follows that genres are not simply created by individuals in the moment of their utterance; to have meaning, they must be social. Individual speakers and writers act within a cultural context and with a knowledge of the different social effects of different types of oral and written text. Genres, moreover, give their users access to certain realms of social action and interaction, certain realms of social influence and power (Kress, 1989b, Ch. 1). In our commonsense understanding of lawyer's language, or academic language, or chess player's language, we know these are social realms from which a lot of people are excluded, and this pattern of social exclusion is marked linguistically. Learning new genres gives one the linguistic potential to join new realms of social activity and social power.

In the world outside schooling, the world of self-taught and self-inducted social mobility, immersion in the social practice of a genre is sometimes sufficient to 'pick up the language', so to speak, although there are obviously other institutional barriers that might still make this impossible or all but impossible. This is not to imply that language users need to be significantly aware of the linguistic 'how' of their activity, even if they are largely aware of the social 'why' of a particular discourse-in-use. You do not have to know about language to be able to use language. It is not necessary to know your linguistic 'hows' to be able to put text into social use and realise its potential 'whys'.

In school, however, there are two sorts of impulses that pull language away from this usual condition. The first is the social role yet inherent limitations of institutionalised schooling. School is the most significant of all sites of potential social mobility. Expressed in terms of language, schooling has the potential to induct students into a very broad range of genres with a broad range of potential social effectivities. However, it cannot do this by immersion alone, nor would that be an efficient use of resources. School is a rather peculiar place. Its mission is peculiar and so are the discursive forms which optimally carry that mission. It is at once a reflector of the outside world and discursively very different from the outside world. Because school needs to concentrate the outside world into the generalisations that constitute school knowledge, it is epistemologically and discursively quite different from most of everyday life in the outside world (Cazden, 1988).

So, as a site of cultural reproduction with an extremely broad charter, schooling is typically theoretical, concentrating knowledge into generalisations. When it comes to speaking about discourse itself — how language is used in school and in the outside world towards which school is oriented — schooling necessarily invokes a metalanguage, a language with which to make generalisations about language. This is just a matter of efficiency and a matter of school's peculiar relation to the world: of but not in the world. The argument of the genre theorists against the progressivists about the uniquely important place of metalanguage in schooling is 'let's not abandon the metalanguage, the grammar; education is the only social site where grammar as metalanguage is really important.' Against the traditionalists the genre theorists' argument is, 'let's always explain the metalanguage in terms of social purpose; if the project of school is social access and part of that is access to genres of a variety of realms of social power, let's make that connection of structure and purpose explicit; let's keep grammar obviously relevant.'

The second reason why the 'hows' of language need to be brought to the fore in education is schooling's unique social mission to provide historically marginalised groups equitable access to as broad a range of social options as possible. This may include groups marginalised by reason of culture, or gender, or socio-economic background, or the social meaning ascribed to 'race'. Even in its most conservative moments, schooling in a democratic society boasts about creating equality of opportunity, and as educators we are duty bound to take this injunction at its word. However, for those outside the discourses and cultures of certain realms of power and access, acquiring these discourses requires explicit explanation: the ways in which the 'hows' of text structure produce the 'whys' of social effect. If you live with the 'hows' — if you have a seventh sense for how the 'hows' do their social job by virtue of having been brought up with those discourses — then they will come to you more or less 'naturally'. Students from historically marginalised groups, however, need explicit teaching more than students who seem destined for a comfortable ride into the genres and cultures of power.

This is genre literacy in principle. All the genre theorists agree on genre at this level of generality. Beyond this, however, there is no precise, common, understanding of the term. J.R. Martin (Chapters 5 and 6) claims it is possible to analyse language at a number of levels, where phonology/graphology realises grammar, realises semantics, realises register, realises genre, realises ideology (Martin, 1991b–c). Gunther Kress (Chapter 1) regards genre as a part of register, along with dialect, mode, plot and so on. Anne Cranny-Francis (Chapter 4) uses the term 'genre' in a way closer to the tools of the trade of literary criticism: to analyse text forms such as science fiction in order to account for the way in which feminist science fiction texts, for example, play the generic game but only in order to be subversive of its conventional textual features and social intent. Frances

Christie (Chapter 7) uses the term to analyse classroom discourse according to its patterns of predictability. Kalantzis and Cope (Chapters 2 and 3) want to force the concept to take on issues of cultural diversity and address general principles of pedagogy.

In a sense, the divergences are the essence of the vitality of the genre literacy movement. Sometimes they are just a matter of talking about different things. At other times they are matters of dispute with theoretical and practical implications. Whatever the differences, however, the genre theorists all believe that genre literacy leads to a third pedagogical direction, beyond traditional and progressivist curriculum. This third direction lies in the interstices of the debate, not in any one understanding of genre literacy at this point. From this perspective, the disputes are more interesting than any of the tentative answers.

In order to discuss some of the key disputes, however, we will first present the bare bones of just one view of genre — the J.R. Martin view. We present this view as a point of reference simply because, to date, it has had the broadest educational influence and is most commonly associated with genre literacy pedagogy, both by its critics and by its supporters. It was the Martin view of genre that was used in the LERN Project for the NSW Department of School Education, conducted by the Literacy and Education Research Network (LERN) — 'pushed' in some respects for the sake of consistency and getting the job done (Chapter 8 and the Bibliographical Essay). The following account is drawn from the publications that came out of that project (Macken *et al.*, 1989a–d).

J.R. Martin's own work started with a series of research projects that set out to analyse the textual demands of school literacy. Just what sorts of texts did schools expect students to generate? On what basis were some texts regarded as more successful than others? (Eggins, Wignell and Martin, 1987; Wignell, Martin and Eggins, 1987; Martin, 1986a, 1989, 1990b, 1991d, 1993). Among the genres identified as important to school literacy for the purposes of the LERN project were, to list six key examples, report, explanation, procedure, discussion, recount and narrative. To give some extremely synoptic content to just a few of these examples: reports are factual texts which describe the way things are, be these things natural phenomena, social phenomena or technical phenomena as humans interact with nature (their functions). They are frequently used in school in social studies and science (their educational context). As texts, they usually start with general classification which locates the phenomena, followed by successive elements contributing to a description, such as types, parts and their functions, qualities, uses or habits and so on (their schematic structure). The focus in reports is on generic participants, without temporal sequence and mostly using the simple present tense. Considerable use is made of 'being' and 'having' clauses (their lexico-grammatical features).

Procedures are factual texts designed to describe how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps. They are more about processes than things (functions). In school they are frequently used in art, cookery and science, for example (educational context). Procedures mostly commence with a statement of goal, followed by an ordered series of steps (schematic structure). They usually centre on generalised human agents such as 'you' or 'the experimenter', use the simple present tense, link the steps in the procedure with temporal conjunctive relations such as 'then', 'now' or 'next', and mainly use material/action clauses (lexico-grammatical features). Recounts retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining: diaries, personal letters, descriptions of events and so on (functions). In school, children's first writings are usually recounts, and the genre continues to have currency throughout schooling: for example, reporting on science experiments and some forms of 'creative' writing (educational context). Recounts characteristically begin with a contextualising orientation, followed by a series of events and often conclude with a reorientation (schematic structure). The focus in recounts is on individual participants, with the text sequenced temporally, often in the past tense (lexico-grammatical features).

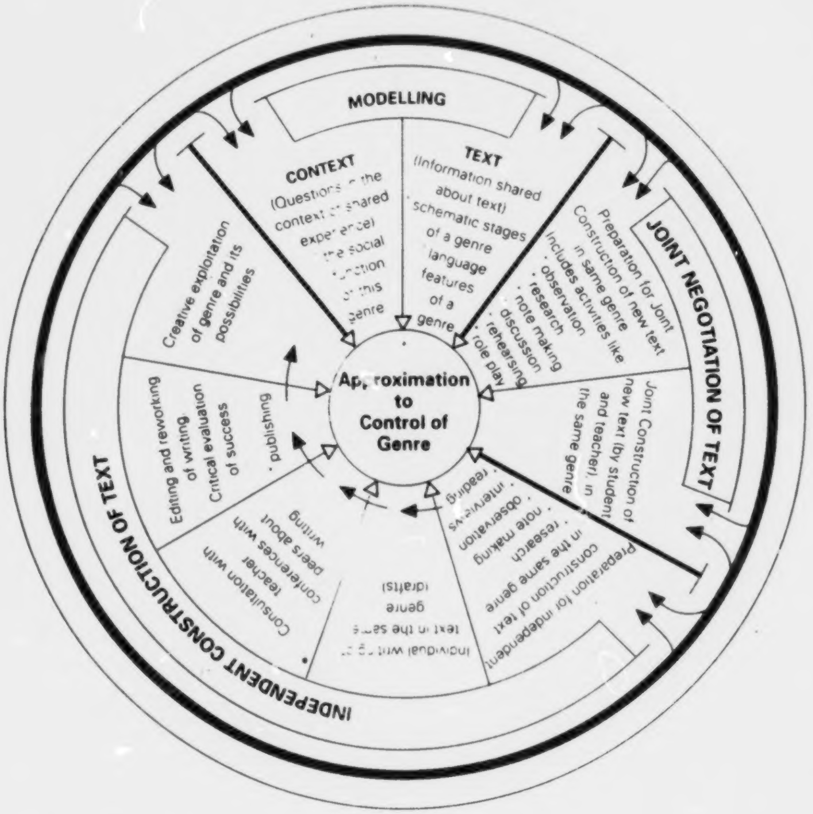
Finally, narratives are texts that do not pretend to be factual, even though they might be closely linked to actual or vicarious experience. They set out to amuse, to entertain or to instruct (functions). In school, narratives are frequently expected in 'creative writing' (educational context). Narratives begin with an orientation which introduces and contextualises the participants. This may be followed by an evaluation which foreshadows the general direction of the story. The narrative develops via one or more complications. These then come to a resolution, and possibly a reorientation that returns to the scene that was set in the orientation and evaluation (schematic structure). Characteristic language features include specific individual participants, use of the past tense, temporal conjunctions and the use of material or action processes in the complication and resolution stages particularly, compared to relational and mental processes in the orientation and evaluation stages (lexico-grammatical features) (Macken *et al.*, 1989b).

The injunction to link social purpose to text structure leads to an understanding of language very different from that of traditional grammar. Starting with the question of purpose, analysis of the text proceeds by looking at the structure of the whole text. Only then does it account for the progress of the whole text in terms of what happens in sentences and clauses. Unlike traditional grammar which starts with words as 'parts of speech' and rarely gets further than dissecting clauses and sentences, genre analysis is concerned primarily with whole texts and their social functions. Sentence and clause analysis is only performed in order to explain the workings of the whole text and how it realises its social purpose.

How, then, is this linguistic conception of genre realised in classrooms? Research in implementing the Martin model of genre (Chapter 8 and the Bibliographical Essay) through the Disadvantaged Schools Program in Sydney came up with a teaching-learning cycle represented in the figure of a wheel. This cycle was also used in the LERN Project (see Figure 1).

The wheel is divided into three phases. In the first modelling phase students are exposed to a number of texts that exemplify the genre in question. If the subject was science and the topic was dolphins, for example, students might read texts on sea mammals from various sources. Generically, these texts are most likely to be reports. This could lead to a discussion of what the texts are for (functions), how the information in the reports is organised (schematic structure) and aspects of the way the text 'speaks' (lexico-grammatical features). Phase two involves joint negotiation of a class text. The first element in this stage is study of the field and the context of the genre: students observe, research, interview, discuss, take notes, draw diagrams and so on. This is followed by joint construction of a class text, in which students participate in the process of writing a report, guided by the teacher. The teacher acts as a scribe as the students contribute to a jointly constructed text which approximates the schematic structure of report genre and employs the key lexico-grammatical features of a report. In the third

Figure 1 The Martin/DSP 'Wheel' Model of Genre Literacy Pedagogy


MODELLING
CONTEXT
(Questions on the context of shared experience)
· the social function of this genre
TEXT
(Information shared about text)
· schematic stages of a genre
· language features of a genre
Preparation for Joint Construction of new text in same genre
Includes activities like
· observation
· research
· note making
· discussion
· rehearsing
· role play
JOINT NEGOTIATION OF TEXT
Joint Construction of new text (by student and teacher), in the same genre
Preparation for independent construction of text in the same genre
· research
· note making
· observation
· interviews
· reading
Individual writing of text in the same genre (drafts)
Consultation with teacher conferences with peers about writing
Editing and reworking of writing
Critical evaluation of success
· publishing
Creative exploitation of genre and its possibilities
INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTION OF TEXT
Approximation to Control of Genre

Source Macken *et al* (1989b)

and final phase students independently construct their own reports: preparing with more work on the substantive field; drafting their own report; conferencing with peers and the teacher about their individual writing efforts; critically re-evaluating their texts as they edit for publication; and then, perhaps, creatively exploiting the genre to represent other fields. The cycle can then be repeated, working on progressively more sophisticated aspects of the report genre (Macken *et al.*, 1989b). The issue of text assessment and evaluation is also a critical part of genre theory (Chapter 9).

The process of developing a student's familiarity with a text is, on the one hand, linguistic, moving from orality to forms of literacy progressively more distant from the grammar of speech. On the other hand, the process is also epistemological. As students are inducted into the discourse and the field knowledge of school subjects, they move from commonsense to a kind of uncommonsense — the uncommonsense that carries technical and specialist knowledges which have their own peculiar ways of making meaning in the world.

In an analysis of the discourse of science in school and on worksites, another genre literacy research project conducted in 1991–1992 by the Disadvantaged Schools Program has identified parallels between the language demands of different stages of science education and the language demands of different occupational positions in science-based industries (see Figure 2). The project documents a progression from commonsense knowledge, from texts that are closer to speech, to texts that — by virtue of the increasing degree of technicality — end up further and further removed from the grammar of speech.

Students are moving into a workforce which, with industry restructuring, requires fewer and fewer unskilled workers. Moreover, the nature of technological change and the changing nature of technology are such that written texts — reports, procedures, arguments and the like — are becoming an increasingly important element of working life. If education is to remain relevant simply to the work requirements of students who may later find employment in science-based industries, and if literacy learning in school is to give students the discursive tools to rise to higher levels in the workplace hierarchy than they might otherwise have reached, then learning science needs to be viewed quite explicitly as a discursive as well as a technical process of cultural induction.

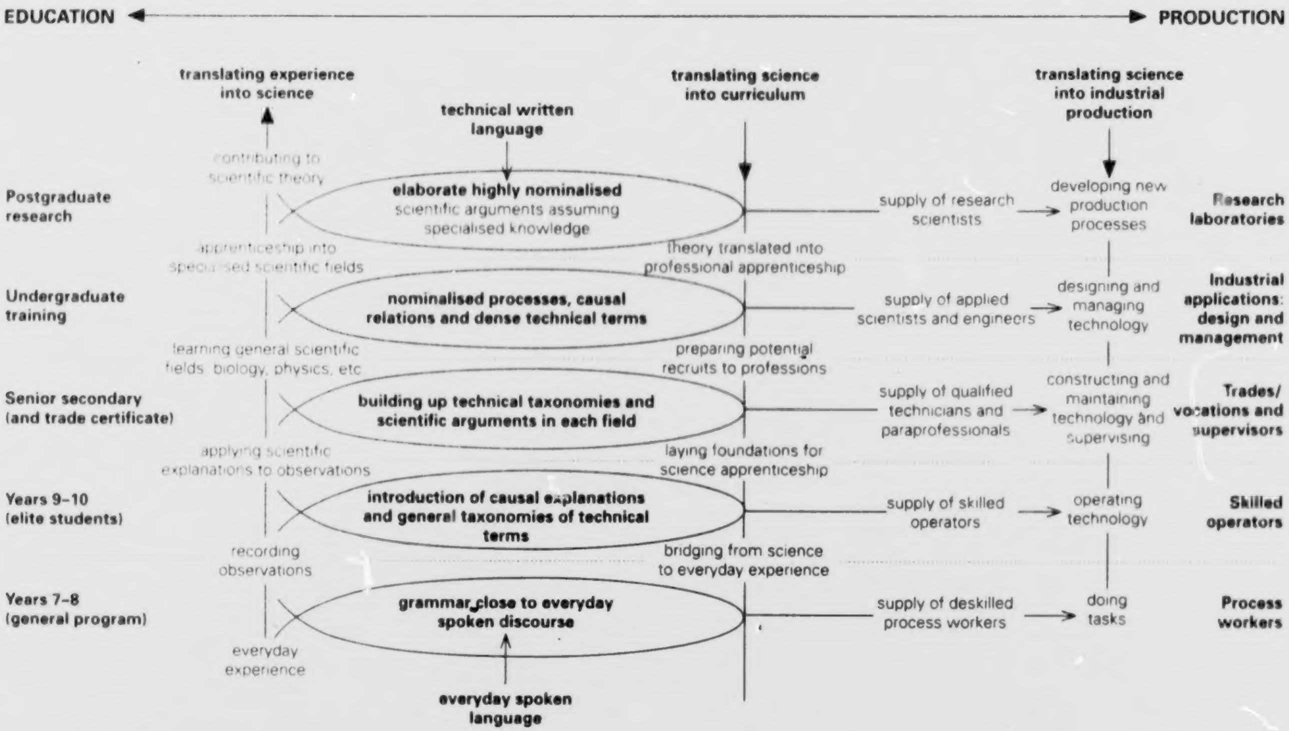
Debates, Diversity, Dissent

Outlining the Martin view of genre literacy is to do no more than present a thumbnail sketch of one version of genre in practice at one moment in time. This provides a point of reference both to locate the main areas of agreement in principle among the genre theorists and to indicate some of the general lines of debate. The debate is engaged along two related axes: the one linguistic and the other pedagogical. The authors in this book represent the range of the linguistic and pedagogical debate within the genre school, though the debate is not foregrounded here because the purpose of the book is to introduce the scope and the principles of genre literacy teaching. The tensions are, nevertheless, critical to reading the book and to finding a version of genre that meets one's own pedagogical predispositions. To follow the debate in greater, and necessarily more technical, detail, the reader can use the historical and bibliographical material that forms the conclusion to this book (Bibliographical Essay and Bibliography).

Taking the linguistic element of the debate first, just what is this concept 'genre'? Here the debate within the genre school is mostly between adherents of the Martin line and those with a looser set of sympathies in the direction of the Kress view (Chapters 1 and 8). Kress expresses concern about Martin's apparent project of infinitely continuing to classify new genres as a result of educational practice. In basic terms, teachers keep stumbling over important 'new' texts which just don't seem to fit the generic descriptions. What if something is not quite a report, not quite a recount and not quite a procedure? The process of classification, he argues, seems at times to be heading in the direction of a new formalism, where the 'correct' way to write a report is presented to students in the form of generic models and exegeses of schematic structure.

Kress, by comparison, is less interested in classifying textual forms than he

Figure 2 The Language [illegible]ience in School and Work


EDUCATION
PRODUCTION
translating experience into science
technical written language
translating science into curriculum
translating science into industrial production
contributing to scientific theory
Postgraduate research
elaborate highly nominalised scientific arguments assuming specialised knowledge
supply of research scientists
developing new production processes
Research laboratories
apprenticeship into specialised scientific fields
theory translated into professional apprenticeship
Undergraduate training
nominalised processes, causal relations and dense technical terms
supply of applied scientists and engineers
designing and managing technology
Industrial applications: design and management
learning general scientific fields: biology, physics, etc
preparing potential recruits to professions
Senior secondary (and trade certificate)
building up technical taxonomies and scientific arguments in each field
supply of qualified technicians and paraprofessionals
constructing and maintaining technology and supervising
Trades/ vocations and supervisors
applying scientific explanations to observations
laying foundations for science apprenticeship
Years 9–10 (elite students)
introduction of causal explanations and general taxonomies of technical terms
supply of skilled operators
operating technology
Skilled operators
recording observations
bridging from science to everyday experience
Years 7–8 (general program)
grammar close to everyday spoken discourse
supply of deskilled process workers
doing tasks
Process workers
everyday experience
everyday spoken language

Source: Rose, McInnes and Korner (1992)

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is in the generative capacities and potentials of using certain kinds of text for certain social purposes. In a sense then, Kress has remained closer to the origins of genre literacy in Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1985a and the Bibliographical Essay). Even though Halliday does not use the concept of genre, Kress's use of the term remains close in spirit to Halliday's use of the concept 'register'. This is not to say that Kress's 'genre' is equivalent to Halliday's 'register'. Halliday's linguistic analysis pivots on register variation — the interrelation of field, or what a text is about; tenor, which explains the interpersonal relations in the text; and mode, which demonstrates how the text interacts with the world. The important point for Halliday, however, is that register is not a basis for classifying texts into formal categories, but a tool for analysing texts in their infinite variety and subtle variations. This is closer to Kress's anti-formalist inclinations than to Martin's notion of genre.

A second linguistic difference is that Kress starts by describing the social relations between the participants before he begins to take apart a text. Martin, on the other hand, advocates 'a semiotic theory of the social' and starts with the text itself. By disentangling the layers of register, genre and ideology in text, Martin believes that the critically literate reader will be able to discover all they need to know about the social context of the text for the purposes of a semiotic analysis. Hasan, who follows Halliday's analysis of register — his theory of text in context — argues that this only collapses context into text — it collapses the social into language. She argues that it is impossible to construe the social entirely from the semiotic. To go beyond describing language in order to explain language, it is necessary to regard text and context as separate, while recognising that they are powerfully related. The tendency of Martin's approach to genre, argues Hasan, is to make it seem that text is a finished product to be described rather than a process to be explained. All too easily, this can lead to a structural formalism which does not reflect the fluid social and textual relations that characterise text in context (Hasan, 1992).

Turning now to the pedagogical element of the debate, some members of the genre school, while agreeing in principle that it is important to be explicit about text structure and its relation to social activity, argue that the formalistic tendencies in the Martin version of genre in practice do not lead beyond progressivism, but towards the revival of a linear transmission pedagogy. In its practical manifestations this version of genre pedagogy emerges as a very understandable reaction to the dominance of progressivism in Australia for almost two decades, and this is why it has been received so enthusiastically by so many teachers here. But from the point of view of Britain's education system, Kress fears this might fuel the slide to educational authoritarianism in the 1980s and early 1990s, taking schooling back to a time when students sat in rows in large classes, instructed by the teacher using the most didactic of transmission pedagogies. From where he stands, Kress calls for more openness about curriculum contents, and principles of generativeness in literacy curriculum instead of principles of modelling that lead to transmission of textual forms. Martin, on the other hand, argues that the only beneficiaries of open curriculum and active learning in the progressivist mould were middle-class students and that empowerment of marginalised students involves inducting them to the discourses of power. He also argues that the deconstructive process needed to understand the ways texts are manufactured and used is in itself empowering.

When it comes to the pedagogical details, Kalantzis and Cope have argued against the 'wheel' model. To them, modelling involves no less than telling students how they should write — a process which culminates in their achievement being marked in terms of how well they realise the predetermined generic structure. Despite the activity work around field early in the curriculum cycle — researching or discussing the substantive issues for a piece of writing in science, for example — in practice textual form is largely presented in an uncritical way at the modelling stage. The joint construction stage is then meant to help students internalise the form exemplified by the model so they can reproduce that form in so-called 'independent' construction. The cycle imagery, in other words, belies the fact that the underlying pedagogical process is linear. Not only is this a reincarnation of the transmission pedagogy but it also takes genres at their word and posits their powerfulness uncritically, solely on the grounds that they should be taught to groups of students historically marginalised by the school literacy. It also leaves out of the curriculum other texts that might be culturally important in students' lives.

To a certain extent, all genre theorists would agree that genre literacy should open students' educational and social options by giving them access to discourse of educational significance and social power (Chapter 3). However, standing alone, this view is one that tends to ignore the fact that many of the textual forms which constitute identifiable genres that have historically been relevant to school learning also represent a very particular set of cultural illusions, allusions and even delusions. Report is a genre that appears to be factual and voiceless. Far from it, reports carry powerful human agendas. Their neutrality is not just a part of their descriptive function. This is also a convenient pretence. Narrative is a genre that appears, if one takes its own textual devices at its word, to have its origins in individual creativity. Far from it, narratives are the products of social experience, and the reader of a narrative, as a cultured entity, is as much a part of the meaning making process as the ostensible author of the text being read. The reader is in a position even to disrupt narrative and read things into it which its author never intended. Report and narrative, in fact, might not be the best genres to be teaching, and certainly not uncritically.

To go back to the question of classification, one of the problems of the research base for some versions of genre literacy is the analysis of texts from traditional curriculum. Just because certain genres can be identified as those that have been required for success in school in the past does not mean that schools should redefine these as genres for success in the future. We need a new language curriculum and a new use of language in the curriculum, not just a better educational technology to reproduce the traditional genres of school literacy. In reality, fixed classifications of genre may even mean that teachers lose sight of where the real power lies. Those who are really innovative and really powerful are those who break conventions, not those who reproduce them. There is a generic moral in *The Jolly Postman* story by Janet and Allan Ahlberg.

> Meeny, Miny, Mo and Co, Attorneys at Law
>
> Dear Mr Wolf,
>
> We are writing to you on behalf of our client, Miss Riding Hood, concerning her grandma. Miss Hood tells us that you are presently

occupying her grandma's cottage and wearing her grandma's clothes without this lady's permission.

Please understand that if this harassment does not cease, we will call in the Official Woodcutter, and — if necessary — all the King's horses and all the King's men.

On a separate matter, we must inform you that The Three Little Pigs Ltd. are now firmly resolved to sue for damages. Your offer of shares in a turnip or apple-picking business is declined, and all this huffing and puffing will get you nowhere.

Yours sincerely

H. Meeny

This text succeeds because it disrupts genre distinctions and plays on cross references between texts. *The Jolly Postman* didn't sell a million copies because it fitted oh-so-well into a genre. On the contrary, it sold well because it broke generic conventions. Nor does it have one definable social meaning or social purpose. It works for children in different ways from adults — some of the jokes are really for adults — and that is another secret of the book's success. In response to this argument, those who want to classify and describe genres more definitively contend that this sort of play is only possible once you know certain fundamental genres. As genre theory evolves, however, it becomes obvious that more and more text is generically problematic. To describe this, we need to move beyond categorisations of the generic, towards using genre as an analytical tool for engaging with the multigeneric, intergeneric and heteroglossic texts of societies where differences of ethnicity and subculture and style are increasingly significant elements in daily interaction.

Indeed, the cultural or individual inclinations of a reader may violate genre distinctions, even when the text seems so straightforward as to prevent this from happening. Purpose, text and meaning are not always related in straightforward ways. Just as *The Jolly Postman* deliberately invites a reading that draws on the linguistic and cultural resources of the reader, so even apparently unambiguous genres can be disrupted by a reader's personal or cultural inclinations. To become 'good readers' and 'good writers', students should be encouraged to be critical and not just follow the generic line. The most powerful texts cross generic and cultural boundaries. We might gain new insights if we were to read a logicoscientific text on building a bridge as a story, for example, or a technical treatise on nuclear power as a moral homily.

Kalantzis and Cope also believe that schools must take the cultural and linguistic diversity of their social setting into account. In a sense, the worst practices of genre literacy not only tend towards a transmission pedagogy. They also resemble the cultural assimilationist model of education. These versions of genre literacy pedagogy seem to propose that there are certain genres of social power and it is the particular mission of school to deliver these to those groups marginal to the cultures and discourses of power. In an analogous situation, traditional curriculum simply failed students not attuned to middle-class English, the canon and the culture of literacy. It ascribed the subsequent 'results' to individual ability. In reaction, progressivism abandoned the cultural deficit model that seemed to underlie traditional curriculum, where students failed because they had a deficit measured in terms of the cultural and linguistic biases of the school. So, progressivism replaced the universalistic, homogenising pretensions of traditional pedagogy with curriculum diversification which set out to value difference, to grant self-esteem to students by valuing their own discourses, cultures, interests and aspirations. This notion of self-esteem, especially when handed down from middle-class liberals, was extremely patronising. In effect, it meant a live and let live approach to patterns of difference which, not coincidentally, matched patterns of educational and social outcome. This is the reason why genre literacy attempts to refocus on the discourses of power.

But to hand down discourses of power once again, with all their cultural and ideological loadings — reports that pretend to be voiceless, and narratives that pretend to express individual literary creativity are both very peculiar middle-class conceits — is in its own way just as patronising. It assumes again that the discourses of power are intrinsically more worthwhile than other discourses. This is an approach that has the potential yet again to fail students for reasons not intrinsic to the functional potentiality of their texts. It is inconceivable in this model, moreover, that transmission should take place in the other direction — from marginalised discourse to the discourses of power. Clearly, genre literacy could develop a tendency to restore a hidden curriculum whose linguistic and pedagogical presuppositions amount to a reconstituted cultural deficit model.

This outline of the debate within the genre school expresses worst fears about potential worst practice. Theoretically, it reflects alleged tendencies of different linguistic and pedagogical versions of genre in the context of a continuing dialogue. It does not reflect the more carefully modulated and qualified theoretical positions of each of the protagonists. The reason the debate is presented here in this form is because it is this that makes the genre movement interesting. As an unfinished project, both theoretically and practically, it remains open to such different interpretations and different uses.

Genre in Principle

It cannot be stressed enough that there are important things about which all members of the genre school can agree. Even the fact that its members are concerned enough to argue along these axes of linguistics and pedagogy indicates a common frame of reference where it is possible to agree upon genre-in-principle. This reflects a great deal of respect for alternative views of genre, even if they are not the ones to which any particular member of the genre school might subscribe. We will conclude with some principles drawn from what we consider to be the best practice of genre literacy. In the flux of the debate within the genre school, these principles more or less fall out of the interstices between the various positions.

The most important point here is that genre-in-principle is pedagogically innovatory for a number of reasons. First, the pedagogy behind genre literacy in its most powerful moments establishes a dialogue between the culture and the discourse of institutionalised schooling, and the cultures and discourses of students. Unlike this, traditional curriculum attempts to transmit fixed cultural and linguistic contents through curriculum but fails those who do not find a comfortable home in the culture of schooling; while progressivist curriculum, despite its pretence to openness, operates with a set of cultural and linguistic presuppositions that are loaded in less explicit ways to favour a certain sort of middle-class culture and discourse. Second, genre literacy in its most powerful moments uses cultural and linguistic difference as a resource for access. In comparison, traditional curriculum sets out to assimilate students, to teach them cultural and linguistic uniformity in the interests of constructs like 'national unity' and 'failing' those who along the way do not meet up to these singular expectations; while progressivist curriculum values differences but in so doing leaves social relations of inequity fundamentally unquestioned. Third, genre literacy sets out to reinstate the teacher as professional, as expert on language whose status in the learning process is authoritative but not authoritarian. The bias of traditional pedagogy, on the other hand, tends to draw it towards a textual, classroom and cultural authoritarianism. The tendency of progressivism is to reduce the teacher to the role of facilitator and manager in the name of student-centred learning which relativises all discourses. Fourth, the pedagogy that underlies genre literacy uses explicit curriculum scaffolds to support both the systematic unfolding of the fundamental structure of a discipline and the recursive patterns that characterise classroom experience. Contrast this with traditional curriculum, which rigidly structures the knowledge it values as universal into dictatorial syllabuses, dogmatic textbooks and didactic teaching practices; and progressivism, which favours unstructured experience, 'natural' immersion and an eclectic pastiche of curriculum content. Fifth, and finally, in the pedagogy of genre literacy students move backwards and forwards, through alternate processes of induction and deduction, between language and metalanguage, activity and received knowledge, experience and theory. This transcends the limitations of traditional curriculum, which puts a premium on deductive reasoning by positing received epistemological truths as the point of departure, and progressivism, which puts a premium on inductive reasoning based on experience.

Insofar as curriculum is a dialogue between the culture of schooling and the cultures of students, the relation between students' discourses and the discourses of educational access has to be one of genuine give and take. In one sense, it is a pedagogical commonsense that students' starting points and curriculum starting points coincide in effective teaching. But more than this, even as curriculum progresses, it is not simply a matter of transmitting 'better' discourses, such as certain genres that have proved historically central to educational success. Curriculum should lend consciousness across cultural and linguistic boundaries without trying to erase these boundaries. It should give students new ways of meaning for unfamiliar social settings, but never because these new ways of meaning and social settings are considered superior or because acquiring these skills requires the denial of domestic or communal ways of meaning. Lending consciousness does not require cultural and linguistic assimilation. The dialogue has to be multicultural and heteroglossic. However, this is not a multiculturalism of irreducible, relativist difference — the multiculturalism of progressivism. It is a multiculturalism of genuine dialogue that allows both sides of the conversation some sort of access to each other's cultural realms without either party attempting to exert cultural sovereignty over the other.

In this dialogue, difference is a potential resource for access. Students who come from historically marginalised cultures have a unique resource for unpacking the hidden cultural agendas and linguistic wiles of discourses unfamiliar to them. To come back to our generic examples, they might be able more easily to see through reports, with their feigned voicelessness. Or they might be able to see through narratives that ostensibly flow from the pen of the creative individual author. They can do this because these sorts of texts immediately stand out as strange ways of speaking. For middle-class students, these genres may appear much more natural. Denaturalising texts like these, discussing the relation of textual form to social purpose, is potentially a more straightforward exercise for cultural and linguistic outsiders. Once they have come to grips with structure and purpose in genres of educational success and social power, cultural and linguistic outsiders stand a better chance of making meaning through the intergeneric play that characterises those texts that really grab people: for their originality, for their cogency, for their off-centred insightfulness.

For teachers working with minority students in economically depressed settings, all this might seem pie-in-the-sky, so idealistic that it is practically unachievable. In fact, the general approach to diversity is not so far-fetched. It is just a statement of commitment that underlies the best of genre literacy practices: that genre literacy need not mean a return to assimilationist transmission pedagogy. On the contrary, it can turn difference into a resource for access, a resource for creativity and a resource for cultural renewal. In this respect, students of the dominant group might benefit from an intergeneric, multicultural view of their own discourse. A genre literacy curriculum could be a site where the cultures and the discourses of the margins are also a subject for literacy curriculum, used not only to highlight by contrast the structures and purposes in the discourses of conventional school success and social power, but perhaps also to reshape these so that they are more potent, or more explicit, or more subtle. Through genre literacy, indeed, the discourses of the margins might be able to influence the discourses of the mainstream. Instead of one-way transmission, genre literacy might be able to foster the cross-fertilisation of discourses and the cross-cultural hybridity which is potentially an enormously creative asset in a society that recognises and values its diversity.

In this dialogue between the culture and discourse of school and the cultures and discourses of students, the teacher stands in an authoritative relation to students. As much as progressivism guilelessly tries to deny it, there is an inevitable asymmetry in the relation of students and teachers. No matter how much a teacher pretends to establish a relationship with students of learners-in-partnership, it is still the teacher who determines this teaching/learning style and remains the person who manages, facilitates, disciplines. The challenge is to minimise the management function — to do, in other words, what progressivism was unable to do. The solution of genre literacy to this dilemma is to attempt to displace as much as possible a discourse of authoritarian management with a substantive discourse that is authoritative in relation to curriculum contents. The teacher's authoritative position does not have to translate into disciplinary authoritarianism. Their authoritativeness is a relationship to knowledge. They are authorities in their discipline and their profession: language education.

To give the example of genre literacy, the teacher's authoritative position arises from three types of knowledge of grammar. The first is a substantive knowledge of the grammar of discourses of educational success. In this sense, history teachers and science teachers, insofar as their subjects are carried by the written word, need to know grammar just as much as English teachers: to be able to make explicit the way text structure serves a particular disciplinary and social purpose. Second, teachers need a knowledge of grammar as an heuristic for analysing the relation of text to social purpose. Beyond the fact that they need to know the grammars of the key texts of school literacy, it would be too much to expect them to have a substantive knowledge of the grammars of the range of possible discourses of their students. But they do need to know how grammar can be used as a tool for students and teachers to analyse and discuss the relations of text form to social purpose, and the intergeneric relation of the texts of different cultures.

The third authoritative role of the teacher is as an expert on pedagogy, an expert on what constitutes worthwhile learning and how language is best taught. In genre literacy, here again, grammar is crucial. But this time it is neither grammar as substantive knowledge nor grammar as a practical analytical heuristic. It is knowledge of the cognitive role of teaching students grammar for its own sake. 'Grammar' is a term that describes the relation of language to metalanguage; of text to generalisations about text; of experience to theory; of the concrete world of human discursive activity to abstractions which generalise about the regularities and irregularities in that world. This movement backwards and forwards between language and metalanguage involves, alternately, induction and deduction.

One of the world-historical peculiarities of the culture of industrialism is that, to get around socially, one has to be able to concentrate reality into generalisations: use scientific generalisations rather than describe empirical physical events, for example, or see social institutions at work and not just nameable individuals. Cognitively and linguistically, the forms of thought and metalanguage that doing grammar requires in school are just those that are required to negotiate with the social structures of industrial society (Chapter 3). So, the teacher as pedagogue is another sort of expert, an expert who knows that grammar is a tool for teasing students' consciousness from what Vygotsky characterised as complex thought to conceptual thought — a sociolinguistic peculiarity of the culture of industrialism (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978).

Finally, how does the authoritative role of the teacher displace authoritarianism and minimise managerial discourse in the classroom? The answer to this question lies in the notion of scaffolding (Cazden, 1988). A pedagogy for teaching grammar needs to be carefully orchestrated in educational practice. If students are to develop a metalanguage and the linguistic-cognitive skills for generalisation and abstraction that go with it, the teacher and the curriculum need carefully framed microstructures and macrostructures. One such microstructure was developed in the pedagogical research that was a part of the Social Literacy Project (Kalantzis and Cope, 1989a). This microstructure runs though the following steps, the move from one step to another being indicted here by a ^ mark: {focus question pointing to an area where significant generalisations might be made ^ input that presents text or empirical reality as problematic or contested ^ critical analysis of input ^ generalisation and theory making: working complexes progressively in the direction of pseudo concepts, concepts and theoretical discourse ^ relation of theory to individual and cultural experience ^ evaluation of whether the concept can be reapplied successfully to distant contexts, and, ultimately, whether it can be meaningfully defined in relation to other concepts}. Within this cycle, which may run for one lesson or extend over a number of lessons, students are always positioned as active learners, but active learners who need to move inductively/deductively between experience and generalisation (Chapter 3).

Then there are macrostructures, what Bruner calls the fundamental structure of subjects (Bruner, 1960). The generalisations need to be going somewhere, as they develop from complex thinking into conceptual thinking, and, as concepts, connect into theoretical knowledges. To speak specifically, a grammar curriculum needs to be sequenced across terms and years. It requires a sustained program where the theory itself builds up — knowledge about language — and, with it, students' cognitive-linguistic capacities.

Herein lies a new role for textbooks. Only carefully planned programs, sustained over long periods of time and founded on expert knowledge, can achieve goals this ambitious. This is too much to expect of individual teachers working in isolation even if they have the requisite knowledge of grammar. Apart from handing back to students a sense of the overall frame of the curriculum denied them by progressivism, textbooks are almost a logistical necessity. But they have to be very different from the textbooks of traditional curriculum, which tell facts and, at best, expect students to reason deductively from received generalisations — 'application' exercises and the like. New textbooks for a new pedagogy will have to remain faithful to certain of progressivism's insights, such as the power of active learning related to experience. Yet they will also need to have their own explicit recursive patterns which draw students beyond experience to generalisation, and back to experience. In this sense, they will need to speak in a new voice, a voice totally different from that of either traditional or progressivist curriculum.

These are the general directions of a new pedagogy that underlies the genre literacy movement in its most inspiring moments. In a sense, the genre literacy theorists would like to think that the pedagogy which grounds their work is not so much a radical new way, however much they eschew traditional and progressivist pedagogies. They would like to think it is what good teachers have always done. In its most general propositions about the nature of learning, the pedagogy of genre literacy tries to encapsulate the best of teacherly commonsense. It reflects the spirit in which the best teachers — as effective communicators — instinctively subverted the excesses of whatever the prevailing pedagogical regime.

Reading 2E

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When basic skills and information processing just aren't enough: rethinking reading in new times

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Introduction

In 1914, Edmund Burke Huey, the first US reading psychologist, argued that in learning to read the child reader retraced and recovered the footsteps of 'the' culture. His metaphor was a product of the evolutionary theories of his age, depicting the child's individual development (i.e., ontogenesis) as parallelling and catching up with that of the larger dominant culture (i.e., phylogenesis). To this day, psychological theories of Piaget and Kohlberg, Habermas and Vygotsky are built on a similar conceptualisation of the relationship between individual cognitive development' and the linear 'progress' of culture. But central to Huey's position was a stress on reading as a form of moral formation and regulation. Huey, like many of his American contemporaries, had been strongly influenced by colonial Protestantism: hence, in the midst of his drive to apply experimental approaches to the physiology of reading, he retained a belief that reading was and should be tied up with learning the values and ways of a culture. This is my theme today: the moral and political consequences of ways of reading. My argument is that reading instruction is not about skills but is about the construction of identity and social relations, and that, in light of the new workplace relations and citizenship of late capitalist society, we can and should shape it differently in current Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language contexts. To do so, I argue, requires that we teach and practise a critical literacy, one not only based on theories of language and discourse but, more importantly, a sociological vision of work, social institutions and social change in the next century.

Huey died shortly after writing his Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading (1914), after turning away from his focus on reading to the dubious enterprise of intelligence testing. But in many ways his work opened Pandora's Box: it was extended, interpreted and applied by behaviourist psychologists Thorndike and later, Gray, Gates and others to build a psychological model of reading which fit industrial era US educational policy. The residual traditions of those models, the construction of reading as behaviour, skill and, now, information processing, still form the heart of current reading instruction, both in schools and in adult programs. In its short, 100 - year history as a focus of psychological research and curricular development, reading has changed drastically: from a means of communication with divinity and a means for moral development, to reading as behavioural skills, to reading as deep linguistic processing and "a psycholinguistic guessing game", to reading as vocational competence. Of course different 'schools of thought' about reading get run together in common sense and current definitions. The Australian Adult Literacy and Numeracy Competency Scales (Griffin & Forwood, 1991, p.48) list the following competences under "D: Understanding of Familiar Contexts": "Recounts content, events and characters of a short text or instructions written in a clear time sequence. Reads often.... Reads and interprets most short novels, work related reports, simple safety notices, newsletters and notices". There are serious categorical and theoretical problems in such classifications of literacy that bear further debate and analysis, in this case psychologically based assessment tasks (e.g., "recounts content") are mixed with everyday habits (e.g., "reads often"), with descriptions of specialised text types. But a critique of such competency scales is not my focus today. My concern here is with the version of the social order, the vision of institutional life implicit in recent adult education curricula, syllabus materials, skills profiles and so forth. Looking over current and recent reports on "key competences", "audits", "profiles" and "generic skills" in Australian adult education, one could be forgiven for thinking that we inhabit a world of literal language users: that the domains of everyday institutional life are conflict free places of robotic consensus; where nonfiction workplace texts are, more or less, clear and unambiguous; where readers and writers go about their work each day reading, quite literally recalling and doing as texts tell them, telling and writing truths, responding "acceptably", "efficiently", "appropriately", and, as the ALAN scales remind us, "often". Such approaches to reading assume that one can and should 'read the truth' in the memorandum posted on the notice board, the commercial or political flyer handed out on the streets, and 'tell the truth' on the job form. Such approaches assume that occupational literacy is a simple matter of recognition and compliance. Functional reading, as it is defined in most current scales and recent reports, is conceived of as a non-problematic instrumental activity. By these accounts, it entails simple, straightforward basic skills of information processing and assembly which, once possessed, can be deployed automatically and efficiently. These definitions tend to assume that, for instance, the job instructions one encounters are economical, effective and yield optimal results; that, for instance, the instruction sheet that goes with a particular appliance is accurate and correct. They assume that the extant power relations in the workplace which such texts represent are not only fair and explicit, but as well that such power relations are the most efficient, effective, and indeed, 'clever'.

In the rush of enthusiasm for national profiles, scales, curricula, benchmarks, it is imperative that we ask: Is this the literacy of New Times? Will this vision of "discursive work" (McCormack, 1991) transform work sites into competitive workplaces which engage workers constructively in globally competitive production, quality control and workplace democracy? At first glance, it looks to me largely like the industrial workplace of old, the one that got us and other OECD countries into trouble in the first place where compliance, where holding one's tongue, where "minding one's P's and Q's" (Bourdieu, 1991) is the premium. It assumes that speedy compliance is the way towards productivity, workplace efficiency, and so forth. If this is the 'clever society', then cleverness in many competency statements is rule recognition and acceptance of extant texts, genres and discourses.

My proposition here is simple: that there are no universal 'skills' of reading. Reading is a social practice, comprised of interpretive rules and events constructed and learned in institutions like schools and churches, families and workplaces. Implicit in ways of teaching reading are social theories, models of the social order, social power and social change, models of the institutional everyday life, models of worker/employee relations and, ultimately, models of how the literate worker and citizen should look and be. Simply put, reading instruction has always described and prescribed forms of life: of how Dick, Jane and Spot should be and act as citizens and readers, and indeed of how migrants and workers should be and act as citizens and readers. In this sense, reading is never a 'foregone', consensual or harmless conclusion, any more than living and participating in those institutions are foregone, consensual and or harmless conclusions. Are workplaces, families, public administration and other institutions models of consensus and agreement? I think not. As Game and Pringle (1983) have argued, just as changes in technology and workplace relations run hand in hand with changing systems of patriarchy and domination, they can be contested, rebuilt and remade. What I'm suggesting here is that how programs construct 'reading' and 'literacy' in the workplace depends on sociological explanations of how institutions work, of how power works, of how particular groups and classes of workers and citizens use written and spoken language in the workplace. Literate in whose interests? To what ends? What kinds of readings and readers? These key questions are on the table in current curricula and study programs, buried in terms like 'acceptable', 'appropriate' and 'effective' reading. My argument today proceeds in two steps. I begin with examples from the history of reading, showing the moral and political regulation of reading pedagogy and showing how perspectives of the last 100 years continue to influence current agendas, defining and constraining how we see reading. I follow this with a brief summary of how reading instruction is about prescribing a relationship of power between text/reader. I then make the case for a model of reading as social practice which Peter Freebody and I have developed (Freebody & Luke 1990), arguing that this model is suited for making critical readers for the 'New Times' of a globalised economy and PostFordist production.

LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF READING

In 19th century colonial countries like Canada and Australia, reading education was constructed along a great divide of class and urban/rural location. Of course, colour and ethnicity were not yet factors insofar as indigenous peoples and slaves were not entitled to education. Most children studied the 3 R's in primary schooling, leaving school after a few years to enter the rural sector and domestic work. Those who stayed were moved incrementally through matriculation levels towards a literary literacy which introduced them to a classical canon. In a manner similar to current calls for 'minimum competence' for lower socioeconomic students and 'cultural literacy' for elite students (cf. Cope & Kalantzis, 1993), the 19th century model of schooling generated two literacies, and two interpretive communities: those with the 'basics' and those with elite literary competences. Hence, while all began with versions of the British authored Irish Readers, elite White males moved on to a grammar school education which centred on literary study. Whether in Fiji or India, Australia or Canada, the political function of schooling thus was to construct a colonial class system of workers (and, when necessary, soldiers) in agricultural and resource based economies, and an upper class of managers and civil servants with unwavering allegiance to the Mother Country. In so doing, the moral messages of civilised, Christian and gentlemanly conduct were inseparable from instruction in reading and writing.

A similar, if more politically autonomous training developed in the United States. There 3 R's training pivoted around books like Noah Webster's American Spelling Book and the McGuffey Readers, stressing the dangers of Papism, traces of Anglophobia, and the virtues of the Protestant work ethic and the emergent American nation state. The key point I would make about 19th century reading instruction, then, is that it was overtly about shaping and constructing a moral human subject. That construction pivoted around a vision of the social order and where and how different kinds of readers/citizens/workers would figure. Without a psychological theory, prior to the pedagogical invention of oral reading, its regime of skill and drill stressed physical discipline of a literate 'habitus' (cf. Bourdieu, 1991): what counted as reading were basic skills of penmanship, copying, oral recitation and, in advanced study, the imitation and rote recitation of literary and spiritual texts. The significant breakthrough in the redefinition of reading occurred in the United States after the First World War. Then several socioeconomic factors converged to enable and encourage a redefinition of reading as psychological skills. Not least of these factors was the rapid expansion and diversification of the US population, its urban manufacturing and retail base, and, with these changes, the growth and articulation of a comprehensive 'free' state schooling system. As part of a larger agenda of social engineering, and the application of emergent sciences of efficiency, management and manufacturing to all domains of the social, the state schooling system was redesigned as an industrial factory for the production of literate workers. Unlike the classbased system of 19th century education, industrial era education promised to be fair, equitable, based on 'merit' (hence, meritocracy). These conditions set out a fertile environment for the emergence of educational psychology as the guiding discipline for the reorganisation of schooling and, ultimately, reading (Luke 1988). In this regard, the 'official' regulation and surveillance of literacy training took on the guise of neutral, 'disinterested' scientific practice.

This redefinition of reading in the interwar period had two powerful strands: behaviourism and progressivism. Behaviourist psychology redefined reading as a set of behaviours or skills which could be generated by various textual and instructional stimuli. Psychologists like Thorndike, Gray, Gates set out to taxonomically identify the skills of reading, and to generate standardised reading tests & texts (as 'stimuli') to efficiently transmit and measure these skills. At the same time, Deweyian progressive education lodged reading curricula within project and theme based instruction, stressing civic, community and family activities and values. The results, amalgams of psychological definitions of reading and progressive themes, were series like the Dick and Jane readers, prototypes for the modern basal readers like PM and Endeavour which still are used in many Australian schools. The aim of such programs was the 'total' instructional package which was both 'teacherproof', adaptable to various student clientele regardless of background or nationality, and complete with teachers' guidebooks, standardised tests, progress charts and other adjunct products.

The debate between 'phonics' and 'word recognition' advocates reached a pitch in the 1950s, when Rudolf Flesch's polemic, Why Johnny Can't Read, accused US reading psychologists of aiding and abetting a Moscow based attack on American youth by stressing word recognition approaches to early reading. The great debate over who had the best, most efficient and 'true' psychological model of reading and, relatedly, about whose textbooks, tests and instructional schemes should be bought and used continues to this day.

However, the current manifestation in what we might term 'reading wars' has been between advocates of direct instruction in psychologically defined skills, and those who advocate progressive, holistic approaches to reading. The latter have been strongly influenced by psycholinguistic and cognitive theories which define reading in terms of the construction of meanings. Like the earlier debate between phonics and word advocates, the current debate still is being waged in terms of who has the 'true' psychological, 'intraorganistic' (Halliday, 1978) explanation of reading, and of which model is most 'efficient' at delivering reading competence.

I would argue that the terms of these 'reading wars' have been fundamentally misconstrued (and misrepresented) by the participants. Since the early 20th century turn from overtly ideological approaches to reading, reading experts and state school authorities, supported by governments and industry, have succeeded in 'changing the subject' in redefining reading as psychological skills, in redefining the reader as a skilled worker, and in redefining teaching as the neutral transmission of skills. What these technocratic models of education fail to recognise is that reading always is tied up with the formation of moral values and identities, political ideologies and beliefs, and with the construction and distribution of particular kinds of textual practice, authority and power.

In this light, the cultural limitations and political blindspots of conventional reading instruction are not simply errors of instructional emphasis and timing. Research in the psychology and pedagogy of reading has a long history of shunting normative social and cultural issues to the sidelines of instruction, as subordinate to the acquisition of cognate skills, whether described as 'basic', 'functional', or 'higher order' text processing strategies. These key theoretical and practical omissions are continuing characteristics of cognitive and psycholinguistic approaches to reading. Schema theories of reading, for example, recognise the relationship between structured, culture specific background knowledge that readers bring to texts and the knowledge demands of text. However, such models stop short of recognising how knowledges and texts can be ideological, that is, how particular knowledge structures operate in the interests of social configurations of power (Freebody et al. 1991). In this way, psychological versions of reading tend to privatise and individuate social and cultural knowledge. Where comprehension and critique are defined as matters of the personal deployment of individualised knowledge resources, a socially critical model of reading is not possible.

READING, POWER AND TEXTUAL AUTHORITY

The foregoing is a story about how reading has evolved and been defined in relation to particular industrial, economic and political agendas. I have drawn principally from work on the North American emergence of progressive and technocratic approaches to literacy; Australian and UK patterns would vary. I have suggested that the 'truth' claims of psychological, linguistic, psycholinguistic and literary theories have not been the central factors in the definition of reading and literacy. Rather the normative agendas of governments and their attendant school systems, class and industrial interests, larger cultural and economic changes, have driven the selection and framing of particular approaches. This is particularly important to bear in mind when 'reading' the politics of literacy and whose interests are involved in, for instance, the most recent enthusiasm for workplace literacy linguistic audits, key competences, and so forth. Whether such models are true' or not have less to do with their ascendancy than the larger political forces vying to shape literacy, literate workers and citizens into the next century. Those of us who build, propose and implement models of literacy training are constrained and enabled by these same politics and power relations. I would here want to draw attention to three aspects of this history:

(1) Even and especially where it has been framed in terms of culturally neutral, universal skills, reading has been used in literate cultures as a way of forming, of shaping up particular kinds of moral and social identities. In effect, there is no 'right way' to read, but rather that differing approaches to reading shape or form up what will count as reading differently from literary recitation, to baseline decoding, from scriptural memorisation to word recognition, to doing job tasks and filling in forms 'effectively'. (2) Tied up with this has been the formation of a 'canon', the sanctioning of particular topics and contents, an ideological field deemed worth reading and writing about.

(3) Reading instruction constructs a relationship between text/reader. This relationship is not one which is 'reflexive' or 'interactional' as described in cognitive and psycholinguistic terms but is a social relationship in which the relative authority/agency of text and reader are shaped; it is, in sum, a relationship of knowledge and power.

Let me take this third point further. When we teach reading we teach relationships of authority , of where texts can be criticised, where they are fallible, where they can be questioned, when, by whom, under what auspices. Recently, AfroAmerican educator Lisa Delpit (1988) has argued that there are codes and rules for what she calls "the culture of power", a culture dominated by particular classes and, we would have to add, ethnic groups and genders. She goes on to argue that explicit knowledge about and access to that culture is prerequisite for power sharing or access and that organic, progressive pedagogies systematically favour mainstream, middle class children. I agree with Delpit's argument. But I would argue that it is mistaken to assume that texts per se are imbued with power. Neither texts nor genres themselves have power. Rather they are sites and capillaries where relations of power are constituted and waged, and these relations are contestable (Foucault, 1977). Power isn't something static that we carry around in our heads; nor is it the intrinsic property of the linguistic features of the text. Power is something which is done, power is in your face. By contestable, I mean this not in a broad revolutionary sense, but rather in terms of everyday struggles and transactions on the shopfloor, in the marketplace, in the office. Relations of power are played out not solely in terms of the wielding of texts as metaphorical swords, between bosses and workers, between supervisors and assistants. Rather, they are part of the complex strategies and tactics of face to face relations in the workplace. As Rob McCormack (in press/1992) recently pointed out, this entails deciding when to speak, when to be silent, when to commit something to print, or when that commission to writing may be used to indict you, your superiors or your co-workers, when to talk behind someone's back.
For example, as Game (1989) and Game and Pringle (1983) demonstrate, office work entails relationships of gendered power, subordination and an entire sexual economy. What I am suggesting is that there is more at stake in work than recognising a genre, having a conscious grasp of its textual

characteristics, and then deploying it or deciphering it. What is entailed in strategic literate practice is not only the mastery of linguistic rules and competences to construct a meaningful spoken and written text but the 'reading' of a set of social rules to decide whether to construct it at all, whether the institution and event are worth participating with, contesting, ignoring, dismissing with humour and so forth (deCastell et al. 1986). Let me try to translate this into the issue of reading in adult education and ESL programs. If power is relational, and students learn in reading instruction a social relationship with the text, then reading instruction fixes a set of relational possibilities and constraints on what practices can be done with the text. In those conventional programs that stress socalled 'lower order' reading skills, or even those programs which stress socalled 'higher order' comprehension skills, the meaning of the text goes uncontested and unchallenged. Quite simply, where reading is conceived of as basic skills whether decoding, word recognition, recall, or even as 'meaning making', pragmatic questions about the strategic place and use of the text in a context of situation tend to be subordinated; and critical questions about the veracity, validity and authority of the text tend to be silenced. As an alternative, I would argue for a model of reading that enables one not only to decode and construct messages, but which makes explicit and overt the social relations of power around the text, and places squarely on the table the issue of who is trying to do what, to whom, with and through the text.

CRITICAL READING IN NEW TIMES: A PROPOSAL

Concepts of critical literacy in reading psychology are theoretically and practically limited. Where it is mentioned, critical reading is taken to refer to 'higher order skills' with text, such as the capacity to make semantic predictions, to infer and construct alternative outcomes and authorial intents, to spot propaganda and bias. In the Handbook of Reading Research 'critical reading' warrants only two comments: Baker and Brown (1984 p.356) observe that in most American reading programs instruction in critical reading is developmentally delayed, and often given little more than token attention in comparison with, for example, the teaching of decoding or recall skills. Although they vary greatly, current approaches construct reading as psycholinguistic and cognitive 'processes' internal to the student reader. What is omitted from psychological approaches is recognition of two key aspects of reading and texts. First, reading is not a private act but a social practice, not a matter of individual choice or proclivity but of learning the reading practices of an interpretive community. Second, texts are not timeless aesthetic objects or neutral receptacles for information. Rather they are important sites for the cross generational reproduction of discourses and ideology, identity and power within these same communities. In this sense, I would want to affirm the value of current emphases of many programs: teaching people how to crack the 'code' of written language and how to 'construct meaning', as much of the aforementioned psychological literature suggests. But I would argue that these pragmatic and critical dimensions of reading practice are equally essential aspects of reading practice.

Accordingly, Peter Freebody of Griffith University and I have developed a model to describe what we see as four key elements of proficient, critical reading as social practice in late capitalist societies. You will recall that I concluded my history noting the inescapable moral regulation in reading. Here Freebody and I argue that the following model of reading is not 'true' in a 'scientific' sense but rather that it is a normative statement about what we think reading should entail in a democratic culture, institutional life.

CODING COMPETENCE
learning your role as code breaker
(How do I crack this?)

SEMANTIC COMPETENCE
learning your role as text participant
(What does this mean?)

PRAGMATIC COMPETENC
learning your role as text user
(What do I do with this, here and now?)

CRITICAL COMPETENCE
learning your role as text analyst
(What is this text trying to do to me?)

Table 1: ELEMENTS OF READING AS CRITICAL SOCIAL PRACTICE
(Source: Freebody & Luke, 1990)

In what follows I review some of the challenges that each presents students and teachers. Because of the vast research literature and current instructional concentration on 'coding' and 'semantic' competence, I here concentrate on 'pragmatic' and 'critical' competence, and provide some examples of the latter in action.

Coding Competence: Learning Your Role as Code Breaker

Mastery of the technology of written script requires engagement with two aspects of the technology: the relationship between spoken sounds and written symbols, and the contents of that relationship. That work concludes that the failure of individuals to acquire proficiency with the structured nature of spoken language and its components is a major factor in reading failure and can lead to avoidance strategies which extend far beyond primary schooling. These findings are corroborated in Johnston's (1985) study of adult illiterates, who reported that they experienced 'success' in early reading instruction through memory and the use of pictorial aids, but that their lack of resources for contending with the technology of writing became a source of withdrawal and failure in school.

We are not here providing justification for isolated 'skill and drill' approaches to phonics and word recognition, for learning decontextualised spelling and grammatical rules. For learning to read effectively entails far more than this. We argue that knowledges of the alphabet, grapheme/phoneme relationships, left to right directionality and so forth are necessary but not sufficient conditions for using literacy for particular social functions in actual contexts. As Cole and Griffin (1986) suggest, it is a matter of providing understandings of what that technology entails and of practising its use with aid of an accomplished text user. Part of mastering that technology entails learning your role as text participant.

Semantic Competence: Learning Your Role as Text Participant

By semantic competence, we refer to development of those knowledge resources to engage the meaning systems of text. Cognitive, literary and semiotic theories of reading together stress the importance of topical and textual knowledge in the reading of new texts and genres. In effect, readers bring complex intertextual resources to reading (Luke, 1993), a stock of knowledge built up from prior readings of texts of various media, everyday community experiences and so forth. These resources are neither universal nor wholly idiosyncratic, but tend to take on culture specific configurations and patterns, drawing from extant ideologies and discourses available in particular interpretive communities. This signals that the use of texts about which learners have limited background knowledge can be a hindrance to comprehension. This would be particularly significant in the case of instruction for ethnic and linguistic minorities, where learners bring varying bodies of cultural knowledge and semantic resources to bear on the text. However, beyond the use of 'relevant' text, it also underlines the need for explicit instructional introduction to those texts and genres that make new culture and even gender specific meaning demands on students.

Pragmatic Competence: Learning Your Role as Text User

A reader may be a fluent decoder and able to construct meaning, but be wholly unfamiliar with how, where, and to what end a text might be used. As ample ethnographic studies now demonstrate, reading occurs in boundaried, identifiable literacy events (Heath, 1982). These events are far from spontaneous and arbitrary but occur in the contexts of institutional life and entail social relations of power. There readers learn what the culture counts as an adequate use of reading in a range of school, work, leisure and civil contexts. In the structured 'language games' around text, particular conventions are in play regarding how to get the floor, turntaking procedures, what can be said about a text, by whom, when, and so forth. To use a simple bank form, for example, one cannot just read and fill out the form, but one needs to know the rules for the service transaction within which the form is used. This contextual characteristic of reading practice has been a longstanding concern of communicative approaches to English as a Second Language. However, it tends to be omitted in those approaches to reading that stress behavioural and cognitive skills. Views of reading as a private, internal act are very much a legacy of both monastic traditions of scriptural exegesis, and of 19th century Romantic models of reading which featured in, for instance, Preface to Lyrical Ballads, and were the object of satire in works like Madame Bovary. There literacy is defined as a technology of the self, as a means for the conduct of an internal mental life. But if we view literacies as social practices undertaken with others, then indeed students must learn what to do with a text in a broad range of social contexts. Whether one is trying to make sense of a loan contract, planning a job related task, or participating in a classroom lesson about a text, one needs to know how to 'do' reading as a pragmatic, face-to-face competence. Being a successful text user, then, entails developing and practising social and sociolinguistic resources for participating in 'what this text is for, here and now'.

Critical Competence: Learning Your Role as Text Analyst

One may be able to decode a passage of text adequately, and bring to bear the relevant knowledge resources to make sense of a text, and further be able to use the text to meet particular purposes at work, school or home. But all of these can remain fundamentally acritical procedures: that is, they can entail accepting, without question, the validity, force and value of the text in question. Written texts are not neutral, transparent windows on the realities of social and natural world (Voloshinov, 1986). Rather they are refractive; that is, they actively construct and represent the world. To read critically, then, requires awareness of ,and facility with, techniques by which texts and discourses construct and position human subjects and social reality. Recent models of critical reading as discourse critique set out to engage students in the practices of critiquing reading, writing and speaking practices, such that the political power and knowledge relations expressed and represented by texts and discourses are foregrounded (Baker & Luke, 1991). Their purpose is to engage readers directly and actively in the politics of discourse in contemporary cultures, to open institutional sites and possibilities for alternative 'readings' and 'writings'. The theoretical parameters for a discourse analytic approach to reading are drawn from poststructuralist and feminist discourse theories, systemic functional linguistics, and neomarxian cultural studies. Kress (1985) outlines how texts construct 'subject positions' and 'reading positions'. That is, texts both represent and construct 'subjects' in the social and natural world, and they position and construct a model reader. The lexical, syntactic and semantic devices of texts thus portray a 'possible world', and they position the reader to read or interpret that possible world in particular ways. Accordingly, a discourse analytic approach to critical reading would include, for instance, an understanding of how words and grammatical structures shape up portrayals of the world, human agency, cause and effect, and so forth. It might also foreground some of the linguistic techniques that texts use to define and manipulate readers (e.g., imperatives, pronominalisation).

These devices for building up possible worlds and social relations are most obvious in texts like newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements, commercial and political pamphlets. Consider, for instance, the following excerpt from a secondary school 1987 "Social Issues" textbook:

Think of your own family. You are probably aware that you belong to a separate group in society. You feel that you are in some ways 'different' from the Browns or the Smiths across the road. Each member of your family plays a number of roles. You may look up to your father or mother as the 'head of the family' or the 'family breadwinner'. Your mum or dad, for their part, will expect you to behave in certain ways to help out with the dishes or in the garage, for example...

The version of the world and the social order built up here is readily identifiable and contestable in classroom talk. A version of the ideal, Anglo nuclear family is built up through this 'nonfiction', with the Browns and Smiths across the road, and two parents who expect you to do dishes and clean the garage. But the reading position is established through the use of the imperative, e.g., "Think of your own family..", which literally tells you what to do when you read. Further, the reader is constructed and positioned by the use of pronominalisation (e.g., "You", "your") which depicts your identity in relation to your "separate group" and the social 'other'. Classroom discussion of 'what the text is trying to do to me' can begin from analyses of such allegedly nonfiction, but value and ideology ladentexts of everyday life (for classroom frames and strategies, see Freebody et al. 1991).

What I am forwarding here is not some kind of esoteric 'deconstruction' or 'ideology critique' divorced from everyday life, but is essential for dealing with apparently quite straightforward and innocent workplace texts like job applications, documents like credit forms and loan applications. These too have powerful positioning devices which bear discussion and debate, careful consideration before signing on the dotted line. Consider the following text, an extract from the current Real Estate Institute of Queensland Agreement for Tenancy Residential Premises (p. 2): The Tenant hereby covenants and agrees with the Landlord...

> (e) Damage by the Tenant To repair at the Tenant's expense within a reasonable time damage to the premises [sic] furniture, fixtures and fittings caused by the wilful or negligent conduct of he Tenant or persons coming into or upon the premises with his [sic] consent.
>
> (f) Nuisance to conduct himself [sic] and to ensure that other persons in the premises conduct themselves in a manner that will not cause disturbance or be a nuisance or an annoyance to adjoining or neighbouring occupiers.

In this text as well, we encounter yet another construction of an ideal social order of [male] tenants, a set of moral codes governing behaviour and so forth. But there is more to this than just a set of legal sanctions and an attendant 'dominant ideology' at work. The moral description here is polysemous, subject to interpretation. To read and sign this, and to put down your first and last months' rents and deposit, is to effectively open yourself up to someone's (the landlords? the magistrates? your solicitor's?) interpretation and 'reading' of your behaviour. The positioning of the reader/tenant is complete: your fate pivots on the ambiguity of the terms "reasonable", "wilful", "negligent", "nuisance" and "annoyance". You (and your students) might be well advised to consider and clarify these meanings and implications before you sign and pay. My second example is a job application used by a major national fast food franchise which requires that applicants read and reply to typical questions about contact addresses, driver license, health history, banking details, etc. A second series of questions concerns "personal history" asking about education, "previous employment history" (5 blanks), the latter asking the applicant to specify "company name", "phone no." and "reason for leaving". The form concludes by asking the applicant, among other things: "Do you agree to join a union?" "Reason for applying for the job?" "Do you like shift work?" "Any hobbies?".

Is filling this form out just a matter of decoding, constructing meanings and truth telling? I don't think so. To 'read' and respond 'appropriately' to these questions requires a careful second guessing of how the text is trying to construct an ideal (fast food) worker, and position me, the applicant, to respond. To answer, and to get the job, requires something far more complex than simply 'telling the truth'. It requires that I second guess these constructions and positionings and come up with a strategy for answering. The first set of basic information is relatively straightforward, except for those unemployed who might not have a fixed address: Do I reveal this? Do I reveal that I live in 'that' end of town? Or do I offer the 'halftruth' of listing a friend or relative's address?. Regarding my previous employment history: Do I list all the jobs I've held? Only related ones? The one where I had a dispute with the manager? Do I give my reason for leaving (e.g."I couldn't stand the place". "I messed up"; "sexual harassment")? Or a euphemism or decoy (e.g., "relocated to another city")? Finally: Will "agreement to join a union" help me get this job? Deter me? I guess the latter depends on whether I live in Victoria, the particular kind of job in question and so forth. My point here is that there is far more to 'reading' here than simply deciphering requests for information, processing those requests and responding truthfully. Just as the textbook passage and the tenancy agreement prescribe versions of the world so does this job application, where the ideal applicant/reader is constructed. By 'critical competence' then, I refer to the development of a metalanguage for talking about how texts code cultural ideologies, and how they position readers in subtle and often quite exploitative ways. My argument is that in order to contest or rewrite a cultural text, one has to be able to recognise and talk about the various textual elements at work. I offer these critical 'readings' as examples for what could be discussed in relation to functional texts; I would argue strongly that no one 'metalanguage' can be set by governments or institutional structures. Differing literate communities develop ways of talking critically about texts, in interaction with key primary discourses (Gee, 1990), extant registers in people's lives. The approach I have outlined here does not aim for effective 'comprehension', the valorisation of the 'power' of literature, the 'liberation' of 'voice' or, for that matter, the development of esoteric skills of 'deconstruction'. Rather it sets out to teach critical reading as "an understanding of how texts are public artefacts available to critique, contestation and dispute" (Freebody et al. 1991 p.453). To those working with this model in syllabus and program design we would underline two crucial qualifications:

(1) Each element is necessary but not sufficient for a critical literacy. Just as stressing the 'code' at the expense of 'meaning' won't suffice, doing Freire style critical analysis and not attending to issues of students' intertextual resources or 'cracking the code' in, for example, an adult ESL class may present problems. (2) This is not a developmental sequence or cycle or taxonomy. Hence, these should not be construed as 'stages' or 'levels' to be dealt with in turn. In the study of all texts at all stages in our programs, we should rigorously look to ask ourselves what kinds of code, meaning, pragmatic and critical demands and possibilities are in play. Critical reading: Essential or luxury add on?

I have not devoted sufficient time to outlining the 'new times' of a globalised, postfordist economy and what this might mean for industry restructuring, adult basic education, and, more importantly, for the growing ranks of the structural unemployed. The questions of where and how literate work is being skilled and deskilled, of which workplaces are requiring robotic skills and which workplaces are engaging workers in more creative, autonomous textual work, about which workplaces will and can remain viable in a transnational division of labor are issues are being taken up in this country and overseas (e.g., Wood, 1989; Luke, in press/1992). To close, I simply want to make the case for the kind of critical reading I've here described. Conventional reading programs, both humanist and skills based, tend to developmentally delay the introduction of critical textual analysis, assuming that basic reading and writing skills are required before students can engage with larger value and ideology systems in texts. The model that Freebody and I have developed here makes the case that all adult and child readers need to learn a range of literate competences. It does not tell you as educators that you've been 'wrong' about the teaching of reading. It simply states that you've been shaping it in particular ways, defining the horizons for what will count as literacy in particular moral and political directions. And it argues that whether you've been emphasising cracking the code, or making meaning, or even talking about personal responses to politics and literature, that your approach is potentially part of a broader, more comprehensive description of what reading practice could be about. Again: coding, semantic, pragmatic and critical dimensions of reading can be brought to bear on all texts.

The question of how and what to teach as reading in adult education is not solely a pedagogical question; it is not one of finding the right behaviourist or cognitive, linguistic or psycholinguistic theory of reading. We have been down that road for the past 100 years and it has not 'solved' the problem. Rather it has deferred it. Reading is a sociological and, ultimately, political question. The question of what will count as critical reading in literate cultures cannot be addressed solely by reference to literary descriptions of the virtues of literature, psychological descriptions of mental processes, or linguistic descriptions of texts. How nations, communities and school systems decide to shape the social practices of reading are normative cultural and sociological decisions, decisions tied up with how power and knowledge are to be distributed in print cultures. This is what the current policy debates are all about; it is what the national competency profiles are all about; and, ultimately, it is what our classroom practice is all about. Western late capitalist cultures centre on semiotic exchange, where signs, symbols and discourse have become the principal modes of economic exchange and value. Reading is clearly essential for participation in the lived realities of everyday life, childhood, work, and leisure. But to become a functional reader may, quite ironically, make one more susceptible to the discourses and texts of a consumer culture which at every turn builds and defines readers' identities, actions, and their very senses of 'reality'. That is, possession of rudimentary decoding, pragmatic and semantic skills to construct and use meaning from text may appear empowering, but in fact may open one to multiple channels of misinformation and exploitation: you may become just literate enough to get yourself badly in debt, exploited and locked out. In this kind of literate environment, conventional skills models, personal growth and reader response, and comprehension teaching may fall short of meeting the necessities of social participation and citizenship. Critical reading would need to entail an explicit understanding of both how texts are ideological, and how reading is a potential avenue towards constructing and remaking the social and natural worlds. Classroom instruction can be reshaped to enable students to read and write 'differently', to see, discuss, and counter the techniques that texts use to position and construct their very identities and relations.

Some would claim that these critical, political issues are at the heart of 'higher order', elitist literature study; that they aren't central to Adult Education, migrant education, prison education, where many are struggling with the code. Certainly, this is what is implied in those proficiency scales that place literary reading on higher order levels. Further, you may be thinking that for the client in an adult literacy program or recent migrant, basic skills are what count; that your clients, for instance, need to read to operate a forklift effectively, or, for that matter, to wire an electrical item without electrocuting themselves. I think that we can all come up with instances where the automaticity and accuracy of reading is warranted. But even these texts are potentially fallible, polysemous, and suiting particular interests: all texts prescribe and endorse possible worlds. As James Gee's (1990) widely cited analysis of an ostensibly innocent asprin bottle label suggests: there is a whole approach to medicalisation, to illness, to diagnostics and treatment of illness, to multinational pharmaceutical corporations, to physician/patient relations on your local Bayer label. There is, likewise, a whole universe of gender relations constructed on women's 'personal hygiene' products, and, for that matter, a whole universe of how to run vehicles and appliances in instruction manuals, which insist that you use more of the makers' unnecessary products. Is it absolutely essential to use Ford parts? Or Ford brakefluid in your forklift? Will others do? Is it in your best interests to fill out this form and take out this VISA card at 21% interest in the first place? Gee's point is that there are interests, power relations and, crucially, judgements involved in all everyday texts, the kind we teach with and about in ABE and ESL programs. So I disagree with those who claim that learning critical scepticism, that learning critique is some kind of bourgeois add on, unnecessary for marginal clientele. Judgements about what to buy, what to comply with, when to argue back, whether to get angry or hold your peace, how to argue back in speech and writing, are all key moves and moments in the politics of everyday life, not frills, added extras or luxuries for literacy training. For recent migrants, just as for my father and mother when they moved into a new culture, new jobs, new neighbourhoods, what to say, what to do, when to comply, when to disagree were not luxuries. In discriminatory work markets, in situations where you can't get proper housing because of your colour or class, in hard times whether the 1930s or now, in the midst of structural unemployment these are crucial life decisions, around which migrant, working class and women's groups develop a 'folk wisdom'. For my father, a union linotyper who ran into a succession of dead end jobs in the 1930s and 40s, the axiom was: "When the white boss tells you what to do, you agree, then go off and do what you think needs to be done". Whether you agree with it or not, this bit of folk wisdom embodies a theory of institutional power relations, of everyday pragmatic survival, and of criticism. (I think he was implying to me that the bosses in his day were dickheads). To return to my initial point: This is the stuff that the ABE and ESL program never raises. It is more likely to tell me to read and comply 'appropriately', 'effectively' and 'efficiently'. Yet the emergent workplace and community social relations of "New Times" are well underway in some sites. The globalisation of economies and cultures, the transformation from manufacturing to service work cuts both ways. For each documented instance of new forms of productivity and work, new forms of exploitation, of exclusion, of marginalisation have also emerged (Hall, 1990). In his context, it would appear that 'basic skills' and narrowly defined and behavioural specified job skills may simply render one ready for obsolescence amd exploitation in a fluid job market characterised by rapid sector change and structural unemployment. Pierce Bourdieu repeatedly points out one never simply learns 'language' and 'literacy', but, more importantly, one learns a 'disposition' towards language and literacy, a social relation to texts and textuality (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1989). It is this relation which comes to count as a marker for the achievement of literate competence, perhaps more so than any single identifiable skill or knowledge. At the heart of contemporary curriculum, whether phonics or word recognition, progressivist or classicist, skillsbased or humanist, explicit or implicit , is the teaching of the authority of print culture. Beginning in early childhood education children are taught variously to 'understand' and 'comprehend', 'appreciate' and 'experience' literature. Where it is dealt with at all, a sceptical, questioning relation to written texts and text knowledge is considered a later developmental achievement somewhere down the line in schooling or up the scale on Huey or Piaget or Kohlberg's moral levels. The opportunity we have is to construct and develop a reading instruction that foregrounds ways of working with, talking about and back to, and second guessing texts. In the larger context of workplace reform and social justice, a critical social literacy that values critique, analysis, innovation and appraisals for action may be of social, economic and political benefit for the community, for the individual, and ultimately, for the nation.

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Reading 2F

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2 ASSESSMENT AND THE CURRICULUM: SOME BASIC ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

In order to provide a theoretical basis for this report, this chapter addresses some of the key concepts involved in assessment and clarifies basic terms such as **assessment**, **evaluation**, **objectives** and **achievement,** which are used in the literature in different ways. First I shall explore the scope of assessment and evaluation, after which I shall examine the role of objectives in relation to course planning and learner assessment. I shall then look more closely at the meaning of 'achievement' and suggest a way of reconceptualising the notion to reflect more closely the realities of communicatively oriented second-language programmes.

ASSESSMENT VERSUS EVALUATION

The following definition, taken from Broadfoot (1986a:233–4), provides a useful starting point in clarifying the scope of assessment:

> ... an evaluation of a student's achievement. There are many modes of assessment, each designed to allow for the best judgement of a student's performance in a given circumstance. An assessment may be pass/fail or graded or it may consist of verbal reporting.

Here **assessment** is restricted to what the student does. **Evaluation**, on the other hand, is usually conceptualised as broader in scope, and concerned with the overall **programme**. There is, however, some disagreement amongst writers as to which aspects of the programme should be the subject of evaluation.

Some writers (e.g. Scriven 1967) see evaluation as making judgements about the merit or worth of an educational programme in relation to its objectives. Brown, on the other hand, argues against a goal-oriented approach on the basis that **processes** also need to be evaluated for the purposes of improving the programme, and accordingly proposes the following definition (Brown 1989:223):

> ... evaluation is the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum and assess its effectiveness and efficiency as well as the participants' attitudes within the context of the particular institutions involved.

This distinction between assessment and evaluation, commonly made in recent British and Australian literature on general education (e.g. Black and Broadfoot 1982; Marsh 1986), helps to clarify the conceptual confusion which arises when these terms are used interchangeably, as they frequently are by applied linguists (e.g. Murphy 1985). If we see assessment in relation to learner attainment, and evaluation in the context of broader programme concerns, it becomes clear that the information yielded by assessment procedures is only *part* of the total pool of information to be taken into account when overall judgements are made about the worth or effectiveness of the programme or curriculum.

There is a well-documented tendency for some funding authorities and members of the public to judge the effectiveness of educational programmes solely in terms of student achievement, often represented by some kind of summative test score.

But, as numerous writers have argued (e.g. Stenhouse 1975; Simons 1981), this product-oriented view represents an oversimplification of the educational process (see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

THE ROLE OF OBJECTIVES

Closely linked to the debate concerning the appropriateness of 'input–output' models of programme evaluation is the question of the role of objectives in educational planning. It is a commonplace to point out that one cannot assess without having stated what it actually is that one is going to assess. In other words, it is necessary to establish clear criteria for assessment, which would need to be derived from some sort of statement of objectives.

Nevertheless, a good deal of disagreement persists in educational circles about the form in which objectives should be couched. In the context of this debate, the main question is the value of stating objectives in specific and behavioural terms.

Behavioural objectives in programme planning

As every teacher knows, one way of planning a course or unit of instruction is to begin with a specification of objectives, setting out the learner's desired 'terminal behaviour' in the form of the traditional three-part behavioural or performance objective (Mager 1962), which states the **performance** (what the learner will actually do), the **conditions** (under what conditions the performance will occur) and the **standards** (the degree of the learner's skill to be demonstrated). Behavioural objectives have been widely adopted as a means of planning in a wide variety of educational contexts.

The arguments which have been put forward in favour of the use of behavioural objectives are usually along the following lines (see, for example, Mager 1962; Steiner 1975; Stenhouse 1975):

1. They let everyone who is involved in the learning process know what the intended outcomes of learning are. This provides a sense of purpose and a direction for the programme.
2. They provide a criterion against which to judge learning. Achievement can thus be measured in relation to goals.
3. They enable learners to have a more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course.
4. They enable teachers to say what they do.
5. They provide a basis for the individualisation of instruction.
6. The use of objectives means that the development of skills can be seen as a gradual rather than an all-or-nothing process.

Over the past 20 years or so, the use of behavioural objectives in curriculum design has been increasingly attacked by educationalists in the United States and Great Britain. The nature of this controversy has been extensively dealt with in the general educational literature by, *inter alia*, Macdonald Ross (1975), Stenhouse (1975), Lawton (1983) and Barrow (1986), while Robinson and Taylor (1983) have critically examined the relevance of objectives models to adult education.

In the context of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL), the objectives debate has been addressed by Tumposky (1984) and Nunan (1988). The former points out that the use of behavioural objectives in language learning has met with a negative reaction from teachers, and cites arguments against objectives which are similar to those put forward by Stenhouse (1975:72–7). These are as follows:

- Trivial learning behaviours are the easiest to operationalise, so really important outcomes of education will be underemphasised.

- Pre-specification of learning goals prevents the teacher from taking advantage of instructional opportunities occurring unexpectedly in the classroom and stifles teacher creativity.
- Besides student behavioural change, there are other types of educational outcomes which are important, such as attitude changes.
- The approach is mechanistic and dehumanising. (The language in which objectives are couched – for example, 'The learner will demonstrate skill x', etc. – often seems to teachers to reflect a view of the learner as merely a 'skill-getter' rather than a 'whole person'.)
- It is undemocratic to plan in advance how learners are to behave after instruction.
- Good teachers do not use behavioural objectives to plan.
- Measurability implies accountability – this might lead to teachers being judged on their ability to bring about desirable changes in the learner.
- Objectives are difficult to generate.

Objectives and teachers' planning

In considering the relative merits of using behavioural objectives to plan and evaluate programmes and to assess learners, it is necessary first to look at the reality of what teachers actually do. In this connection, research in other educational contexts has provided a considerable amount of evidence on teachers' planning practices which indicates that many teachers do not conceive of or state objectives in behavioural terms (Stenhouse 1975; Shavelson and Stern 1981).

If teachers do not think in terms of specific learner outcomes, then how do they plan? Macdonald (1965) claims:

> ... in the final analysis, it could be argued, the teacher in actuality asks a fundamentally different question from 'What am I trying to accomplish?' The teacher asks 'What am I going to do?' and out of the doing comes accomplishment.

This view is supported by Eisner (1985:54), who also argues that teachers are primarily concerned with learning activities. In an attempt to give due emphasis to the role of activities in any planning instruction, Eisner proposes the concept of the 'expressive objective':

> An expressive objective identifies a situation in which [students] are to work, a problem with which they are to cope, a task in which they are to engage; but it does not specify what from that encounter, situation, problem or task they are to learn. An expressive objective provides both the teacher and the student with an invitation to explore, defer or focus on issues that are of peculiar interest or import to the inquirer. An expressive objective is evocative rather than prescriptive.

While behavioural objectives are concerned with **outcomes,** the focus here is clearly on the learning **activities** themselves. Planning in terms of expressive objectives, according to Eisner, frees the teacher from having to work towards rigidly defined specifications of terminal behaviour and allows for unpredictable outcomes of instruction. This difference in focus between a behavioural and an expressive objective is summed up by Popham (1985:60):

> I see a fairly clear difference, using simple terms, between what a teacher, for example, wants to have happen to the kids and what a teacher decides to do in order to have it happen.

It is interesting to note that this attempt by Eisner (over 20 years ago) to move away from the product focus inherent in behavioural objectives and to develop more open-ended methods of planning which focus on learning processes is only just beginning to be reflected in the TESOL literature in the current adoption of the **task** as the basic unit of planning (Candlin and Murphy 1987; Prabhu 1987).

However, as Popham (1985) points out, Eisner's use of the term 'objective' to refer to learning processes rather than outcomes is confusing: the word itself carries connotations of a future product or outcome. Another problem is that if a teacher plans in terms of expressive objectives there is a danger that he or she 'may select instructional means erroneously because he [*sic*] doesn't have a clear idea of what might happen at the end of instruction' (Popham 1985:61).

Objectives in the AMEP

There is not much documented evidence on the use of objectives in the AMEP. However, the results of the surveys of teachers' objective-setting and assessment practices conducted by Brindley (1984) and Watts (1985) lend support to Eisner's claim that most teachers tend to be more concerned with activities than with outcomes. AMEP teachers' comments in both of these surveys indicate that objectives relating to learner behaviour are not the basic unit according to which teachers plan and evaluate courses.

Watts (1985:26) in fact reports that, of a sample of 251 teachers, 'only six made explicit reference to the use of objectives as a yardstick for measuring student progress'.

There is, on the other hand, considerable evidence that teachers often plan instruction in terms of **teacher aims** which focus on what they (rather than the learners) will do (e.g. 'to present an episode of *The Man Who Escaped*'). Another common method of planning is to think in terms of the **task** or **activity** which is to take place – for example, 'to read an article on immigration and discuss it' (Brindley 1984:56–67).

It is probably for this reason that teachers' informal professional interactions focus more on activities and materials than on objectives. This does not mean they have no idea of what they intend the outcomes of instruction to be. It simply means, as Stenhouse (1975:71) illustrates, that many teachers choose not to conceptualise their behaviour in terms of objectives describing learners' behaviour after instruction.

Objectives and assessment

If, as Eisner (1985:36) claims, good teachers tend to think in terms of 'expressive objectives' or learning activities, then assessment becomes a problem. Objectives which are stated in an open-ended fashion can be extremely difficult to assess, since there are often no specific criteria against which the learners' performance can be judged (as in the above example of reading and discussing an article). Consequently, the learner's success or otherwise in the learning activity cannot be determined.

Assessment of expressive objectives or learning activities may not be a problem in cases where a learning task is defined in such a way as to allow the teacher and the learner to see how well it has been performed (for example, listening to recorded instructions and simultaneously marking a map). Here the task contains its own built-in form of assessment. In other cases, however, the task may be very loosely defined (cf. the above example of reading and discussing an article). In such cases, it would clearly be necessary to state more precise criteria by which to judge the learners' performance if they or the teacher wanted to know what they had learnt from the activity.

Objectives and the accountability debate

The issue of accountability will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 6. In the meantime, it is worth noting that the accountability debate often obscures the educational issues associated with the role of objectives.

Because the writing of objectives tends to be associated with the 'cult of efficiency' (Tumposky 1984) and 'scientific' approaches to curriculum design, the writing of objectives is often identified by teachers more as a task imposed by management than as a way of facilitating their planning or teaching. In this context, the debate on objectives often tends to become confused with issues of teachers' job responsibilities and the extent to which they should have to document and evaluate their activities.

In the inevitable climate of 'us' versus 'them' which surrounds this kind of debate, the learner tends to be overlooked, and the discussion which takes place is not the kind which is likely to encourage constructive discussion on ways in which objectives might profitably be used as a way of assisting learning. In this regard, it is worth noting that there is very little documentation in the TESOL literature of teachers' planning and monitoring practices. Classroom-based studies of this kind would provide valuable information on what happens when teachers set and evaluate objectives.

What kinds of objectives should teachers have?

The argument about objectives, as I have pointed out above, tends to centre on what **teachers** should do. However, if it is the quality of instruction which is the point at issue, it is also important to consider the issues in terms of what is happening to the **learner** during the learning process. In any discussion of what kinds of objectives are appropriate, then, the essential question, as Barrow (1986:232) notes, is one of **purposes**. In every classroom there will be cases in which it will be appropriate for teachers to characterise aims in behavioural terms and cases in which it will not. It all depends on what the teachers are trying to achieve, on the kinds of learners in the class, and on the time, the skills and the resources that are available.

However, setting objectives (of whatever kind) will not in itself automatically lead to more effective learning. The objectives might be irrelevant or incomprehensible to the learners or unattainable in terms of the resources they have at their disposal. For this reason it is very important that learners are involved in formulating the objectives and deciding on the most appropriate ways to achieve them. Objectives are not just a technical tool to help teachers; they are meant to make learners' life easier as well.

As Steiner (1975:32–3) suggests, objectives should, first, provide some guidance to the learner and be stated clearly so that their intent is completely understood by the learners. Second, they should be relevant and meaningful to the learner in terms of the overall program goals as well as the learner's personal goals (this in turn constitutes an argument for deriving objectives from some kind of needs assessment). Finally, they should be feasible – that is, there should be a real probability that the objectives will be achieved.

The debate about objectives, then, is not simply a question of whether or not teachers should set behavioural objectives; it is a question of whether what they are trying to do lends itself to characterisation in these terms. As I have noted above, when learners require detailed feedback, quite specific assessment criteria are required. In these circumstances, it would be perfectly appropriate to think in terms of behavioural outcomes which could be assessed with reference to the agreed criteria. In Chapters 4 and 5 I shall provide various examples of how learners and the others outside the Program can be involved in establishing those criteria and using them as the basis for the construction of assessment tools.

THE MEANING OF ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement versus proficiency

The adoption of communicative principles of programme design has meant that the goals of ESL programmes now are usually couched in terms of bringing about improvements in learners' ability to use the target language. 'Achievement', in the sense of learners' gains in this ability, thus tends to be assessed in two ways.

First, at the 'product' level, a proficiency test may be administered in one or more language skills, on the basis of which the learner is given an overall score or rating on a proficiency rating-scale such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL [Higgs 1984]) or the ASLPR (Ingram 1984) which indicates 'general' progress in the abilities in question.

Second, in order to determine the extent to which the learner has attained particular course objectives, various other forms of ongoing assessment may be used, including observation, verbal feedback from the teacher or others, teacher-constructed tests, self-rating scales, learner self-reports, teacher or learner diaries, and videotaped or audiotaped samples of learners' work. Sometimes, the information

yielded by these means may be incorporated into a cumulative record of learners' achievement. More often, however, the results of this type of assessment are not a matter of public record.

It is standard practice to regard these two forms of assessing achievement as separate and distinct, both in nature and purpose. The first, traditionally classified under the title of proficiency testing, is carried out summatively at the end of the course, using formal procedures, and is aimed at measuring progress made independently of the syllabus. The second type of assessment, usually known as achievement testing, on the other hand relates to the mastery of a specified body of course content and is thus particular to a given group.

However, this distinction between assessing proficiency and assessing achievement is becoming increasingly blurred (Savignon 1983; Brindley 1986; Hughes 1988, 1989) in a number of ways. First, it is possible to argue that the concept of 'proficiency', as it is described in rating-scales such as the ACTFL and ASPLR, is context dependent (Nunan 1986; Bachman and Savignon 1986).

In other words, if proficiency is defined in terms of people's ability to use language for particular communicative purposes, as is increasingly the case (cf. Richards 1985), then 'proficiency' can be interpreted as the achievement of the particular communicative objectives which the target group is likely to have. Thus the criteria for 'proficiency' which would be applied in the case of adult immigrants would be quite different from those used for a group of graduate students in the United States (Bachman and Savignon 1986:386).

If this view of proficiency is adopted, then a summative achievement test based on course objectives would seem to be serving the same purpose as a proficiency test. However, as Hughes (1989) notes, course objectives are not necessarily based on needs, and achievement tests do not always test course objectives. For this reason, he (1989:12) argues:

> Test writers must create achievement tests which reflect the objectives of a particular course, and not expect a general proficiency test (or some imitation of it) to provide a satisfactory alternative.

Second, some of the more formal methods used to assess ongoing achievement are virtually indistinguishable from those used in proficiency testing. This applies particularly to the use of criterion-referenced forms of assessment which entail the specification of well-defined domains of language ability and standards of performance. Constructing such assessment tools will often involve an investigation of the communicative context in question. (For example, a rating-scale based on the abilities required by learners in order to perform successfully in a job interview might be devised. Teachers could then judge the extent to which learners meet these criteria by observing their communicative performance in a mock interview.)

It could thus be argued that the differences between criterion-referenced achievement tests and proficiency tests used summatively (at least when the latter are based on a definition of proficiency as ability to use the language for real-life purposes and course objectives are, in turn, derived from this view of proficiency) are above all a matter of scale, since the purposes of the tests and the tools used appear to be very similar (rating-scales, interviews, role-plays). In this connection, Hughes (1988:42), in support of the case for basing achievement tests on objectives rather than content, argues that the procedure for proficiency tests and achievement tests should be 'essentially the same'.

In addition to summative achievement testing, it is possible to identify a further category of 'achievement testing' which corresponds more to the conventional understanding of the term. As well as the criterion-referenced methods mentioned above, situated roughly halfway along the formal to informal scale, a range of fairly informal ways will also be used by teachers to judge the extent to which learners have mastered the course objectives. These include the ongoing verbal feedback, observation, and teacher-constructed *ad hoc* achievement tests which are part of every class.

The informality of such types of assessment lies in the fact that the learner's performance is often not assessed in relation to any explicitly defined external criteria. Hence a teacher might give feedback in the form of fairly general comments ('very good', 'watch your intonation') or norm-referenced marks ('you got sixteen out of twenty in the weekly vocabulary test').

Achievement testing of this kind is often carried out for the purposes of assessing what Rea (1985:22) calls 'non-communicative performance', that is, it is not focused on real-life communication but on the enabling skills that allow communication to take place. Teacher-made tests – such as dictation, cloze or vocabulary might enable teachers to find out about learners' mastery or non-mastery of particular course-content but would not generally give a direct indication of ability to mobilise these enabling skills for communicative purposes.

Types of achievement

I would like to suggest, then, that the traditional division between 'achievement testing' and 'proficiency testing' does not completely capture the range of purposes for which assessment may be carried out in a communicatively oriented second-language programme. Nor does it distinguish between the type and level of information provided by the assessment instruments used.

I would contend, in fact, that it is possible to conceptualise the notion of 'achievement' at three levels, as shown in *Figure 1* (pp. 14 and 15), each of which will allow for different types of information to be provided in a different form. (Here I am using the term 'level' to indicate level of programme operation. The term has no relation to 'proficiency level'.) 'Achievement' might be assessed at any or all of these levels, by different people, for different purposes, and using different methods and instruments.

Level 1 achievement refers to the gains achieved by the learner in terms of 'overall proficiency'. Here achievement is seen in relation to the total programme. This type of achievement is assessed summatively in the context of programme evaluation when educational institutions or teachers wish to establish how much of the language or of a particular skill has been learned as a result of the programme. The focus of assessment is thus on 'general' proficiency, in Spolsky's (1986) terms, which might lead to a claim such as 'This person speaks English very well!'

Level 1 achievement tends to be assessed formally using standardised means such as test batteries or oral interviews in which learners' performance is rated using proficiency rating scales. Results of the tests might be given in the form of ratings ('This person is a level-three performer') which may be referenced against general levels of performance ('minimum survival proficiency', 'expert user') or test scores ('has a TOEFL of 426'). These results are used by a variety of audiences to obtain an overview of learners' 'overall gains' during a course of instruction. Such information might be used for a range of purposes, including certification; selection for entry to, or progression within, educational institutions; and reporting on programme results for accountability purposes.

In the construction of proficiency tests and rating scales, the criteria against which the learner's performance is assessed are

FIGURE 1. ***Types of Achievement***

	TYPES OF ACHIEVEMENT		
	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
FOCUS	Achievement of overall proficiency in a particular language skill or skills ('general').	Achievement of particular proficiency-related objectives as a part of a given course ('functional')	Achievement of specific objectives relating to knowledge and enabling skills taught in a particular course ('structural')
QUESTION	How much proficiency does this person have in skill x?	How well can this person use the language to carry out task y?	To what extent has this person mastered this particular item of course content?
CRITERIA	Explicit. Based on definition of proficiency underlying test.	Explicit. Based on definition of proficiency as ability to perform real-world tasks	Implicit. Based on definition of proficiency as mastery of a sub-set of items and rules
INFORMATION USED FOR	Selection/Screening Certification Placement Communication to third parties Accountability (system)	Monitoring Diagnosis Self-awareness Communication Motivation Accountability (democratic)	Diagnosis Motivation/Involvement
INFORMATION USED BY	Examining authorities Educational institutions General public Teachers Learners	Teachers Learners Third parties where aware of criteria	Teachers Learners
TIMING	At course entry At course exit	Continuous Results may be aggregated summatively	Continuous As need arises
RELATIONSHIP TO SYLLABUS	Independent	Dependent	Dependent
LEVEL OF FORMALITY	Formal Standardised Results quantifiable	Semi-formal Standardised Results quantifiable if related to overall performance standards	Mainly informal Usually not standardised* Results usually not quantifiable* * *Except teacher-made tests*
TYPICAL PROCEDURES	Proficiency tests Standardised batteries Rating scales	Criterion-related achievement tests Progress cards/objectives grids Profiles of achievement	Verbal feedback Informal discussion Observation *Ad hoc* tests
ADVANTAGES	Administratively convenient Comparability of scores across large populations Face validity of direct measures Scores easily interpretable by outsiders	Relates to particular communicative abilities Relates to learners' life goals Enables learners to see progress	Familiar to learners Builds confidence Breaks down objectives into sub-skills
DISADVANTAGES	Controversy surrounding construct of 'global proficiency' Level of formality may be threatening to learners Reliability problems with some subjective measures (cf. rating scales)	Some methods likely to be unfamiliar and threatening to learners Difficulty of aggregating information Unwillingness of external bodies to accept qualitative information	Gives no information on learner's communicative ability Performance criteria often unstated Results only interpretable by teachers and learners in a given class

derived from whatever definition of 'general proficiency' is held by the test constructor. However, since, as we have seen, testers do not share a common conception of this construct, the content of proficiency measures differs markedly according to the pupose of the test and the population for whom it is designed.

Level 2 achievement refers to the achievement of particular communicative objectives as part of a given course or unit of instruction. The focus is therefore on what Spolsky (1986) calls 'functional' proficiency, in other words the sorts of things people can do in the second language ('This person can fill in a claim for unemployment benefits in English').

This type of achievement is assessed continuously, usually at the end of an activity or unit of instruction, but can also be assessed summatively through aggregation of information on attainment which has been collected throughout the course. Such information can be presented in the form of a descriptive profile of a learner's performance and/or as a record of achievement.

Assessment at *Level 2* is carried out using semi-formal means such as criterion-referenced achievement tests, self-assessment profiles, progress cards and objective grids. The criteria which form the basis of the assessment relate to the ability to perform specific communicative tasks and are consequently very explicit.

The information from these assessments is used in a variety of ways, both for curriculum improvement and for communicating information about learning progress to learners and others. As noted above, it gives an indication of the extent to which the learners have mastered the communicative objectives of the course or of a particular unit of work.

This provides diagnostic information for the teacher to modify the programme, allowing for recycling or modification of the activities. It also provides the learners with an indication of their strengths and weaknesses and helps them to determine their future learning objectives. Assessment of this kind can be a motivational tool, since learners can see how much they are progressing in relation to the course objectives and their personal goals.

Information on *Level 2* achievement, then, is obviously of interest to teachers and learners in the first instance. But it is also relevant to external audiences and can be used by programme administrators,

funding authorities and other outsiders with an interest in learners' gains in the particular abilities assessed, provided, of course, that these audiences are prepared to accept qualitative information which may not be able to be aggregated in the form of an overall score or grade.

Level 3 achievement refers to the achievement of particular objectives relating to the knowledge and enabling skills which are part of a particular course of instruction. The emphasis here is on what Spolsky (1986) calls 'structural' proficiency, which refers to the ability to manipulate the sub-systems of the second language (e.g. 'This person knows the rule for the formation of the plural'). This type of achievement is assessed continuously by the teacher as the need arises in the classroom. The procedures used to assess *Level 3* achievement tend to be fairly informal, such as *ad hoc* discrete-point tests based on work undertaken over a given period (e.g. a weekly vocabulary test), corrective feedback by the teacher, observation, and recycling of work. If a text is being used on a regular basis, the 'progress tests' in the text might be used to assess how much of the content has been learnt.

The criteria which form the basis for assessment of *Level 3* achievement come from the sub-skills and knowledge taught during the course and so do not relate directly to communicative performance. The results of this type of assessment are not usually interpretable by others outside the classroom, since, as I have noted, it is difficult to extrapolate from a learner's score in a test of classroom knowledge to his or her ability to use the language for communicative purposes.

Assessment of achievement at *Level 3* is carried out primarily for purposes of curriculum monitoring and improvement – for keeping track of learners' progress, diagnosing difficulties and building their confidence.

Differing perspectives on achievement

Looking at achievement in this way helps us to see why the different parties involved in a second-language programme are likely to want different kinds of information from assessment. Teachers tend to be concerned with *Level 3* achievement, since it is an integral part of the day-to-day teaching/learning process, which is the main focus of their attention. In contrast, people outside the programme are interested in achievement at *Level 1* because they usually require information on overall gains for programme evaluation and accountability.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have looked at some of the key issues in assessment and tried to clarify basic terminology. I have outlined the distinction which is commonly made in general education between learner assessment and programme evaluation. If we accept this distinction, then it becomes clear that although information on learner achievement might be used as a part of an evaluation, it cannot be used by itself as an index of programme effectiveness.

I have also examined the debate about the role of objectives in planning and assessment, and I have suggested that the question of the types of objectives to be set needs to be considered in the light of both the teacher's and the learners' purposes, needs and resources. Objectives therefore might at times be stated in very specific terms and at others in a more open-ended fashion, depending on whether explicit information was required by the teacher, the learner or other parties outside the programme.

In considering the question of 'achievement', I have proposed that the notion can be conceptualised at three levels, depending on the purposes and information needs of those involved. At this point, however, whether it is possible to reconcile these potentially conflicting needs is the question that naturally arises. In other words, is it feasible to build into a programme ways of assessing achievement that will satisfy the information requirements of all stakeholders? Chapter 3 examines the nature of these requirements by drawing on the results of an investigation into assessment practices in the AMEP.

Reading 3A

Shore S., Black A., Simpson A. & Coombe M. (1993) *Positively Different: Guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language and numeracy curricula.* Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra, pp. 5–31.

CHAPTER 1: THEORY INFORMING INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

We took as a starting point the idea that an inclusive curriculum was only one aspect of a socially just education system. For the purposes of this project, inclusive curriculum is discussed in terms of all the institutional practices affecting learners' experiences once they have enrolled in an adult literacy, language, or numeracy course. An inclusive curriculum achieves the following:

- it actively engages learners in learning that is relevant to past experiences and future needs
- it reflects the similarities and differences found within and between social groups
- it acknowledges the historical and political nature of these points of similarity and difference
- it recognises that the curriculum is a potential site for initiating changes that enhance learners' social and vocational prospects while increasing their awareness of factors constraining their capabilities.

This last point underscores the role of curriculum in *education for social justice* (Reid 1992). Throughout this document, we emphasise that this notion of inclusive curriculum for social justice has a significant impact on the type of guidance that we offer to systems and practitioners intent on inclusive curriculum development.

The critical approach taken in this project has been significantly influenced by our belief that social justice is a concept often founded on flawed ideas about social groups and difference. Theories of social justice often incorrectly equate relational qualities such as rights, opportunities, power, and self-respect with commodities like wealth and material resources (Young 1990). A critical review of these theories indicates a need for fairly significant shifts in current thinking about social justice and the means by which institutions, educators, and learners might engage in inclusive curriculum processes aimed at generating socially just practices.

The first part of this chapter expands on understandings of social justice and the context of adult literacy provision. We discuss ideas about social groups and difference, social justice as a relational concept, a 'family' of concepts that describe various forms of oppression, and the ways in which

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these issues influence the processes of development of, and principles underpinning, inclusive curricula. The second part of this chapter explores more fully the implications for adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision as well as definitions of 'literacy' and language, and understandings of curricula.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CONTEXT OF ADULT LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND NUMERACY EDUCATION

Reid (1992) notes that, historically, initial schooling has adopted at least two approaches to social justice. Some programs inform generally about social justice issues and the inequitable treatment that many individuals and groups experience in society. Other programs promote various course arrangements and teaching practices that ensure greater participation and involvement by particular groups in education systems.

The former are usually identified with redressing historical practices in education that have marginalised, ignored, or silenced group experience, and which are identified as programs offering *education about social justice*. Supposed Aboriginal acquiescence to European invasion of Australia (Reynolds 1982) is one example. Many education programs seek to inform the wider Australian population of alternative perspectives on Australian Aborigines and their place in the history of European invasion.

A second approach to social justice encourages practices within an educational system attempting to 'alter the balance of resource provision in favour of the "disadvantaged" ' (Reid 1992). Such programs ensure *social justice in education*. Attempts to develop inclusive curriculum are an example of how social justice in education might be achieved.

Social justice practices in education are not, however, without problems. Within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field, inclusive practices are most commonly associated with individual tuition, joint collaboration between educators and learners, and learner-centred programs. These practices are believed to offer learners opportunities to increase their control over learning processes that have traditionally not been open to their input and guidance. Like Keddie (1980), however, we suggest that the individual focus of much adult education provision draws attention away from wider social factors that shape the particular educational needs of learners. In adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs in particular, this focus reinforces the notion that individuals are largely responsible for the difficulties they experience. This obscures other factors leading to adult literacy, language, and numeracy difficulties that might be related to any number of things:

- inadequate educational resources
- structurally inadequate educational arrangements at the school or at post-secondary level
- limited schooling because of poverty or because of dissonance between family and school values
- barriers to language learning because of persistent demands on adults to maintain their employment status, study patterns, and necessary levels of family care
- relations of power between educators and learners that limit the ability of learners to influence educational processes.

An emphasis on meeting individual needs has obscured one explicit purpose of adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, which is to overcome many of the unequal outcomes of initial schooling that appear to be systematically reproduced within particular social groups. Rather, inclusive practices have been used as a form of educational humanism that ensures that an individual's needs are met to enable more effective participation in social interaction. This tension between meeting individual and group needs is apparent where:

> [a]dult educators face daily the disjunction between individual and group needs, and they often act as arbiters: cutting short the remarks of a dominant and verbose participant or defending the rights of an individual against a group decision (Tennant 1985, 10).

The potential disjunction between the needs of the individual and the group and how educators and institutions respond to these needs is a central thread through the guidance offered by this project.

The individual focus in many programs also obscures how individuals' needs might be reframed or even revised by educators, coordinators, or administrators of programs attempting to accommodate changing priorities within the institution and the particular constraints of funding requirements. In the 1970s and '80s, literacy provision specifically offered a 'second chance' to individuals who, for one reason or another, had not acquired the basic skills necessary to access further personal or vocational development. In the 1980s and '90s, the 'second chance' has been replaced by a concept of 'lifelong learning', which shifts the educational focus away from deficits emerging from initial schooling experiences to new learning opportunities emerging from demands made on adults as they mature. In the 1990s in particular, new learning opportunities are closely associated with vocational outcomes. Thus, while 'lifelong learning' has broadened the concept of adult learning in a temporal sense, its Australian focus in the 1990s has been constrained by the close association with the education and training required for national prosperity (Shore 1992, 411). These issues highlight the strong attachment inherent in adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision to the 'meeting needs' agenda.

So while social justice outcomes have been the focus of many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, the notion of social justice embodied within such programs is generally an individualist one concerned with 'fairer' distribution of opportunities and skills development to individuals who have traditionally been marginalised or excluded from the educational process.

Such approaches to literacy provision promise 'social mobility, overcoming poverty and increased self-fulfilment' (Street 1984, 104). While there have been many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs that address specific needs of particular groups, for example, programs for people with disabilities or those in correctional institutions, the individual approach within these programs often tends to obscure the difficulties of achieving a wider range of social justice outcomes for groups generally marginalised by conventional educational programs.

Like Reid (1992), we suggest that approaches that target education about social justice or social justice in education are inadequate in addressing fundamental changes to educational settings or social interaction beyond classroom walls. These approaches are flawed in that they do not address the complexity of issues necessary for inclusive practices to have an impact beyond the classroom.

Reid proposes a third conceptualisation linking social justice to educational activity: *education for social justice*.

Any discussion of inclusive educational practices to achieve social justice goals must take account of beliefs held about members of various social groups, how membership of groups might shape actual educational provision, and the actual similarities and differences between and within social groups. Institutional practices must also be examined for how they enable or constrain people in their participation in social life. Such beliefs and practices influence how people go about organising and determining their own and others' involvement in social practices. Policy responses to the needs of particular social groups are central to developing and sustaining inclusive curricula.

In this project, we have adopted the position that a socially just society holds as central values about participation in social activity, expression of self and cultural experiences, and self-determination regarding social action (Young 1990). Such an approach focuses on the relational process by which groups negotiate their interaction and how outcomes of this are reviewed for the manner in which they reflect equitable opportunities for choice and action.

Inclusive curriculum as discussed in this project is ideally aimed at educational change that will enhance the possibilities that learners have to determine actively how they make choices and act on those choices. This process will include certain things:

- being aware of fundamental rights and other possibilities for social action (that is, available and potential choices)
- developing the capacity to act on choices
- being aware of the reasons for, and constraints operating on, a particular choice
- understanding the consequences of particular actions and choosing to act or delay action for reasons related to the situational context.

But the creation of a socially just society and acting in it are no easy matters. Debates rage firstly about what a socially just society might look like, secondly, about how it might be achieved within capitalist contexts given existing levels of inequitable resource distribution and the tendency to avoid discussion of power relations at the heart of such matters, and thirdly, about the extent to which educational activity is likely to have any impact beyond the walls of adult literacy, language, and numeracy classrooms.

We believe that relations of power, and critical awareness of the real and socially constructed differences between social groups must be explored more fully to gain a clearer appreciation of what is involved in developing inclusive curriculum for social justice and the outcomes that might emerge from such a curriculum. To do this, we first elaborate on the concept of social justice and then explore briefly ideas about social groups and difference. For this section we have drawn largely from the work of Iris Young (1990) because of the many pragmatic concepts she develops to understand the complexities of social groups and difference. We are aware, however, that debates about social justice are extensive and controversial and suggest that further readings from the bibliography at the end of this document will offer alternative perspectives.

SOCIAL JUSTICE, SOCIAL GROUPS, AND DIFFERENCE

This project is about developing guidance for inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula, and during such a process, one might query why an inclusive curriculum would be offered in the first place. Various perspectives on social justice help to inform what an inclusive curriculum might look like, how that curriculum might be developed, and for what purposes it might be developed.

The concept of social justice is often associated with ownership and social position, a concept of 'having', of either resources or status, that Young (1990) refers to as a 'distributive' form of social justice concerned with the morally proper distribution of social benefits and burdens among society's members. Paramount among the benefits are wealth, income, and other material resources.

Young proposes that two serious flaws emerge in conceiving of social justice as a process of distribution. First, a distributive concept of social justice masks institutional arrangements that lead to patterns of inequitable relations in the first place. It also takes for granted many inequitable decision-making procedures, work processes, and views of culture already embedded in existing institutional practices. It focuses attention on the product being distributed and quantities available for distribution rather than the deeply embedded institutional processes that enable distribution to occur in such a way that particular social groups are systematically advantaged.

Second, it incorrectly equates relational qualities such as opportunities with the distribution of material resources. Rights and opportunities are treated as the equivalent of commodities to be traded or given as a token gesture to equalise massive social inequalities.

An alternative view of social justice foregrounds relationships between social groups, rather than the material and social possessions acquired by groups, or the conceiving of relationships themselves in terms of distribution (Young 1990). Relational approaches to social justice move away from distributive notions of equalising resources or assuming the many and varied forms of social difference result in essentially similar forms of injustice and oppression. Relational approaches aim to extend participation in social life beyond the highly segmented and structured patterns of participation that currently exist. Young suggests this alternative view is summarised more appropriately as 'doing' rather than 'having'.

One relational approach suggests that obscuring the differences between groups and claiming equal treatment for all will result in equal outcomes for all. Equal opportunity policy is an attempt to redress social injustices in order to achieve equal outcomes of participation by groups normally marginalised in the dominant culture. It does this via a relational approach that advocates equal treatment for all by planing down social difference, selecting on a strict merit basis, and formalising equality of access. On the surface, this approach seems equitable, but there are significant problems inherent in obscuring differences between groups and in denying the history of group association in the consideration of merit. These problems will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter on inclusive policy.

Another type of relational approach proposes a 'politics of difference' that explicitly attends to differences between and within social groups. More importantly, this latter approach rejects the tendency to position those who are different as deficit in relation to prevailing social norms. By adopting a politics of difference, many groups aim to reclaim the right to name their own reality in terms more positive than those usually equated with deviance and deficit in respect to the status quo. Their '[d]ifference now comes to mean not otherness, exclusive, opposition, but specificity, variation, heterogeneity' (Young 1990, 171). It is with this second relational approach that we have positioned ourselves in this project, although we recognise that there are also problems associated with adopting this position, which we explore later in this chapter.

This relational approach to social justice recognises that members of social groups have multiple identities and that a predominant identity chosen by an individual may change with the social context. Claims to particular identities such as 'woman', or 'Aboriginal person', or even silence about identity may represent a political or personal strategy of resistance (Jeffreys 1991). The claims (or silences) are often strategic and contextual; that is, they are a response to particular events and surroundings or even a reaction to a perceived or actual social response to a claim. Claims may not be consistent with the identity perceived by others. For example, older people may identify predominantly as male/female, or of rural extraction, rather than as an aged person.

The promotion of full participation and inclusion in social life requires that people understand the ways in which society operates to include or exclude various people, and, within the context of provision for social justice, this will also necessitate an understanding of the factors that contribute to people as individuals and members of groups actually achieving social justice outcomes.

Such a relational approach to social justice proposes that the differences and similarities between groups are valued and used as the basis for coexistence and enablement rather than for oppression and domination of some groups by others (Young 1990). This 'coexistence' can reduce socially constructed and systematically oppressive categories of difference to particular qualities held by individuals. A politics of difference must recognise also the political process whereby difference is constructed in the first place and how difference comes to be seen as 'human deviance' (Lorde 1992, 48).

This relational view of social justice revises conventional views of decision-making structures and procedures embedded in institutional and educational practices. It examines the ways in which educational work is usually identified, prioritised, allocated, and completed. It challenges the ways in which the culture of a learning setting generally reflects and perpetuates dominant values and meanings. In summary, socially just educational settings and inclusive curricula take seriously the idea that curriculum will not exclude particular ways of understanding and 'doing'.

One further approach to understanding education for social justice focuses directly on how aims and purposes of inclusive curriculum evolve in the learning setting.

'Empowerment' is a term often used to describe the various aims and purposes of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision, but we suggest that disempowerment is often an experience more commonly identified by both learners and educators. When learners begin a course of study, there may initially be some inequality in the perceived power to influence educational processes (Wallerstein 1983). As Shore states:

> [D]ominant schooling practices have shaped expectations of educational practice; the conservative nature of these expectations is prominent in the continuation of largely traditional classroom practices in adult literacy classes (1991, 42).

While Shore focuses specifically on English-speaking-background learners, anecdotal evidence suggests that both experienced and inexperienced non–English-speaking-background learners often come with traditional expectations of learning and largely expect teachers to determine learning processes and products in conventional ways.

Initially, these unequal relations of power between educators and learners create imbalances in the contributions deemed to be of worth in classroom settings. Educational practices for social justice need to take account of the expectations learners and teachers have of educational settings. Such practices must acknowledge and attempt to dismantle ways of operating in classrooms that unnecessarily privilege teachers' formal knowledge and experience. We propose that an empowering adult literacy, language and numeracy pedagogy presupposes 'educational work [which] starts in a position of unequal social power and attempts to change that situation' (Connell 1991, 11). Like Young (1990), we believe that concepts of oppression and domination are more useful starting points for examining how social justice aims in the classroom might be thwarted, because such examination must then focus on relationships of power between social groups. Power, or its lack, is less likely to be viewed as a commodity or a material resource connected to a position. Empowerment or oppression can be seen clearly as a process of relating.

Unlike conventional views of oppression that liken it to the 'exercise of tyranny by a ruling group', Young has extended the notion of oppression to include:

> the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interaction . . . in short, the normal processes of everyday life (1990, 41).

These 'well-meaning people' may include educators, managers, and bureaucrats, whose well-intentioned practices aimed at generating socially just outcomes may not necessarily lead to the emancipatory outcomes they envisaged because relational practice is ignored. Young's interpretation of oppression presents serious challenges for the ways in which institutions enact mission statements proclaiming education for social justice and how educators plan and teach to meet the needs of learners within those institutions. Any analysis and evaluation of adult literacy, language, and numeracy for social justice will need to examine intended and unintended outcomes of programs, and more importantly, the relational practices associated with those outcomes.

Young offers a practical resume of the 'five faces of oppression' that is intended to assist our understanding of the multiple and complex experiences of oppression. While she acknowledges that social difference is the cause of many forms of oppression, she argues that the way in which circumstances oppress cannot be conceived of as simplistically additive. The particular circumstances of being a black person and a disabled person may or may not equate with the experience of being a black, disabled person.

The five faces of oppression

Exploitation

Exploitation represents 'a steady process of the transfer of the results of labor of one social group to benefit another ' (Young 1990, 49). In this way, the latter benefits by persistent transfer of the benefits of the work of the former due to specific relationships of power. A striking example of this within the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field is represented in the labour of volunteers and of many paid workers that maintains an acceptable public profile of adult literacy work but is not recognised nor legitimised by systems. An ethos of 'making more with less' currently pervades educational provision and further exploits the work of both educators and learners by sustaining literacy, language, and numeracy provision at inadequately funded levels.

Marginalisation

Marginalisation mainly results from being excluded from a system of labour because that system cannot or will not use members of particular social groups. Marginalisation is apparent, for example, when older people are excluded from the workforce or social interaction and are entrapped in relations of dependency that define and limit their social interaction (for example, their receipt of a pension or unemployment benefits). Many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs have been marginalised within educational systems because the outcomes of such programs are not perceived as cost-effective or related to the prime purpose of the institution. The closer links between vocational training and adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision have served to *increase* the marginalisation of programs not directly linked to economic outcomes. This has become evident in an apparent resistance or blindness to the needs of literacy learners not seeking courses to enhance their value as human capital in the workplace.

Powerlessness

Young proposes that oppression also occurs as a consequence of the lack of autonomy individuals have over their own labour. While absolute power is only achieved through the concerted actions of many, a number of people have relative power; they are able to exert some degree of control over their own actions and are able to make decisions that influence their own power base. In doing this, they may wittingly or unwittingly sustain power bases already established by others. The powerless on the other hand:

> have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgement in their work, have no technical expertise or authority, express themselves awkwardly, especially in public or bureaucratic settings, and do not command respect (Young 1990, 56).

Cultural imperialism

Cultural imperialism has been seen recently as a form of oppression, whereby the experiences and culture of one group are established as 'representative of humanity'. While this may be unintentional, the effect is to position those beyond the dominant culture as 'the other'. In contemporary times, the culturally oppressed, such as people with disabilities have been portrayed at varying times as dependent, lacking in creativity, having no sexual needs, and generally unable to participate in any form of life beyond functional survival. Yet people with disabilities have asserted their right to redefine and reclaim the boundaries of their abilities in response to limiting definitions from the dominant culture. Within the adult literacy field, both Horsman (1989) and Brodkey (1986) have noted a disturbing tendency among literacy theorists to portray those with limited literacy skills as 'the other'. In their being written about and talked about as a separate group, adult literacy, language, and numeracy participants are often portrayed as 'deviant' and unable to operate effectively in society. This ignores the richness of their lives in areas unrelated to the patterns of communication and control legitimated by literacy programs.

Violence

Violence is the final 'face' of oppression elaborated by Young, and it is often unaccounted for in distributive models of social justice. Its significance lies in the social contexts that initiate and sustain violence, and the manner in which social contexts establish a climate of acceptance of violence against others. In contemporary times, silence about current and past injustices is a form of violence acted out on social groups. It is to this issue of silence that much inclusive practice will need to turn to adequately address what is alienating and oppressive in current practice.

The manner in which each of these conditions of exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence are supported by institutional practices to sustain limited opportunities for self-expression and self-determination leads to a situation of social injustice. **In the context of education for social justice and the development of inclusive curricula, attitudes towards oppression and domination highlight different kinds of educational practices: those that may unintentionally constrain social participation and, those that by virtue of their ability to block, silence, marginalise, or exploit systematically exclude members of certain groups from achieving full democratic participation in educational life.**

In summary, we would argue that distributive approaches to social justice take for granted the institutional structures that help determine patterns of distribution. By extending the commodity status of material goods to such relational qualities as self-respect, they portray relational qualities as products rather than aspects of social relations.

The ignoring of the differences between and within social groups, we suggest, perpetuates the institutional practice of universalising experience as an essential prerequisite for effective and efficient program operation. We believe that foregrounding difference is an essential precursor to revitalising the ways in which educational institutions respond to educational needs. It is also necessary to highlight the danger of a 'fetish for difference' (Kalantzis 1990, 47), in which the significant cultural differences between black and white women, or, indeed, between black men and black women are treated as superficial cultural artefacts. As well as being ignored or discounted, difference has been 'misnamed and misused' (Lorde 1992, 48) to obscure socially constructed and systematically oppressive ways of describing social groups.

This discussion provides a thumbnail sketch only of the issues central to understanding the complex process of inclusive curriculum development in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field. **Within the context of an education for social justice, an inclusive curriculum will be underpinned by these characeristics:**

- **an understanding that all groups have 'culture' or 'ethnicity'; for example, what is significant about white, Anglo-Saxon, masculine culture is its 'taken-for-granted' position as the dominant, valued culture; this obscures its 'ethnicity'**

- **recognition that curriculum development involves selecting knowledge and methods, which, as Connell notes, is not random or neutral with respect to the structure of the society in which it occurs (1988, 66); inclusive curricula must identify the choices that have been made and what drives the selection of these choices**
- **acknowledgement that curricula practices will be influenced by decision-making structures and procedures embedded within the institution in addition to work and cultural characteristics specific to the institution.**

Certain implications for guidance to develop inclusive curricula arise from the work of writers such as Young, Reid, Connell, and Street. **In order that distributive notions of social justice do not mask institutional patterns of oppression, domination, and disempowerment, critical attention must be directed towards these aspects of curricula:**

- **the educator–learner interface and institutional practices that influence adult literacy, language, and numeracy education for social justice; as Young (1990) states, this includes examining the structures and practices, the rules and norms that guide them, and the language and symbols that mediate social interactions within them, because these things condition people's ability to participate in determining their actions and their ability to develop and exercise their capacities**
- **oppressive decision-making and cultural practices that limit involvement, expression, and self-determination in learning settings and institutions**
- **decision-making procedures and cultural practices within institutions for the way in which they appear to be a 'natural' part of modern bureaucratic structures.**

If a positive notion of difference rather than a fetish for difference underpins relational concepts of social justice, then inclusive curriculum must do the following:

- **acknowledge the multiple perspectives that individuals bring to any learning situation as a result of their gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, and/or physical abilities**
- **recognise that membership of social groups is not necessarily confined to a single group; rather, recognise that identification is multiple and complex, and that**

where a focal identity is claimed, it may be in response to contextual factors (Young 1990) or inappropriately sought by others who have a narrow view of how people's identities exist in day to day life (Lorde 1992).

- **recognise the similarities between, and differences within, social groups, and acknowledge that experiences of oppression may not be able to be equated in simplistic additive terms on the basis of connections across common social groupings or common cultural backgrounds**
- **develop skills to examine critically the process of constructing social groups**
- **reflect the experiences of learners, both as individuals and as members of particular social groups**
- **actually value these experiences, and demonstrate this in the way they are used as the basis of learning and assessment**
- **acknowledge the processes by which conventional educational knowledge is constructed and loaded to maintain and enhance a position in social interaction generally dominated by white, middle class, able-bodied males**
- **identify where, how, and why conventional knowledge has systematically excluded the achievements, contributions, and experiences of various groups**
- **develop skills to examine critically social structures that systematically exclude and devalue individuals and particular cultural groups**
- **identify the values that underpin these structures**
- **examine whose interests are being served by these structures**
- **examine the power relationships within the structures**
- **develop policies that do not 'presume as the norm, capacities, values, and cognitive and behavioural styles typical of dominant groups thus disadvantaging others' (Young 1990, 173).**

These principles, guiding ideas and characteristics of inclusive curriculum set the context for inclusive curriculum development in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field.

ADULT LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND NUMERACY PROVISION

Any curriculum initiatives in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field will inevitably be influenced by the predominantly white, Anglo, mainstream focus of provision in Australia, the promises inherent in adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs to both teachers and students, any overseas developments in knowledge about teaching and learning in this field, and the theoretical and practice beliefs that are held by those groups who shape policy.

Central to some beliefs about adult literacy, language, and numeracy practice are notions of social justice, inclusive practices, access and equity, and a sense of empowerment brought about by freedom from the constraints of limited communication and academic skills. As can be seen from the previous discussion, however, these issues, and the implications for practice arising from them are not always as straightforward as they would at first seem. As concepts, they are open to interpretation by different political forces, especially in the different contexts of adult literacy learning, language learning, and numeracy learning, and in relation to the increasingly complex demands made on people in the 1990s.

Development of inclusive provision that critically reflects the variety of perspectives on these issues and that explicitly states the principles underlying them will be crucial in the planning for any system-wide adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula. Such provision will need to examine critically the following:

- **what is to be learnt?**
- **how?**
- **when?**
- **where?**
- **for what purpose?**
- **for whose benefit?**

While on the surface these questions may appear to be extremely broad and lacking in any detailed guidance to systems, institutions, practitioners, or learners, the questions themselves form the bedrock of strategies for promoting inclusive practices within educational programs promoting social justice as an outcome. Chapter three expands on curriculum guidance emerging from these questions.

Since this project is specifically concerned with the development of inclusive *adult literacy, language, and numeracy* curriculum, the central role of language in communication must be examined since it is pivotal in the construction of meaning, and therefore identity and social relations.

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning consists of three distinct but overlapping approaches to learning how to communicate in the everyday sense of the word. It includes learning conventional norms and expectations of a variety of written and spoken English 'literacies' and 'numeracies'. It also introduces non–English-speaking-background speakers to the conventions of spoken and written language required for everyday communication in the English-speaking culture. These norms and conventions are often conservative and uncritical of the potentially limiting and controlling ways in which language and numeracy concepts are used. These are issues that need to be considered if staff and material resources are to address the vast and complex range of needs of teachers and learners. Both teachers and learners may be largely unaware of the multitude of ways in which the cultural imperialism of the English language defines participation in daily life.

Professional development, both preservice and inservice, is essential and will need to take into account the shifting demands of the many social, economic, and political literacies to which learners and educators are constantly exposed. This will necessitate also taking account of the significant similarities and points of difference between further English language development for native speakers and learners from non–English-speaking-background learning.

The following definition of literacy, which has been proposed by the Commonwealth for national adoption, raises other issues that are pertinent to curriculum development:

> Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.
>
> Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.
>
> All Australians need to have effective literacy in English, not only for their personal benefit and welfare but also for Australia to achieve its social and economic goals (DEET 1991, 9).

Although 'effective literacy' may be seen by some as rather narrow and economically driven, in the current political climate, it is clear that the above definition supports a view of literacy use as a social process. Literacy is portrayed as the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking, it has purpose and is influenced by the contexts in which it is used, and it changes as a result of the life experiences and demands made on a person.

This definition is adequate to define common understandings of adult literacy, language, and numeracy and their role in shaping effective participation in Australian society. It is problematic, however, when examined in the light of claims for an education for social justice and the subsequent implications for an inclusive curriculum. **The definition renders invisible the gendered construction of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning, it is apolitical and ahistorical, and makes no allowance for the use of literacy, language, and numeracy as a tool for domination and oppression.** In addition, the definition forwards no model of *literacies* as an appropriate form of communication; that is, different ways of knowing and doing are ignored as needing to be included in the social construction of communication. Literacy is presented as a unified and unifying concept drawing individuals together in purposeful activity aimed at enhancing the welfare of people as individuals and as members of social groups.

While many non–English-speaking-background and English-speaking-background language learning settings readily acknowledge that there are different forms of English language, 'standard' English is generally prioritised, and the standard form is generally referred to as a universal and homogeneous language.

Existing descriptions of literacy and language fall short of the social justice intentions proposed in this project because of the limited acknowledgement of the diversity and value of literacy and language forms other than this false notion of a unified, universalised standard. The ways in which these literacies and forms of language may be used to coerce, silence, or coopt for socially oppressive purposes remains largely unexamined.

The task of this project was to provide guidance for the development of an inclusive approach to adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum. We have not made a claim for a particular form of literacy to be represented by the curriculum, but clearly our discussion is influenced by the increasingly explicit attention being given to the notion of critical literacy. Lankshear (1991) offers the following summary of the central tenets of critical literacy concerned with developing, refining, and expressing a consciousness of social reality:

- 'sociological' imagination
- an active and transformative stance towards the world
- awareness of how ideological representations of reality mask and buttress hierarchies of domination and inequality

- commitment to understanding wholes rather than mere parts, and parts in relation to wholes
- an interest in revealing contradictions within theories and practices to provide a more accurate understanding of reality as a basis for transformative action upon it
- a view of knowledge and truth that assumes theories to be interested rather than neutral and detached
- identification of the process of knowing as praxis.

We agree that critical literacy is about understanding and acting on relations of power that shape patterns of communication, both print and oral. To this end, well-developed theoretical approaches to literacy, language, and numeracy teaching are crucial, but we believe such approaches are incomplete, and inadequate in developing critical literacy, if they do not explicitly acknowledge how power comes to be attached to particular forms and genres of communication. While there are limits here to discussing this issue, it is relevant to note as examples that some competency-based curricula and genre or whole language approaches to learning are not generally explicit about the ways in which educational outcomes are geared towards maintaining prevailing social and educational norms. Thus, while these approaches have contributed to debates about what quality adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning might be, not all debates have been explicit about identifying the 'interested' nature of theories (Lankshear 1991). To be fair, critical pedagogues also fall short sometimes in declaring the particular interests of their own theories (see Elsworth 1989, and Clark 1990)

Since the purpose of this project is to examine factors that influence inclusive practices in a curriculum for social justice, we must examine how distributive views of social justice and current adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision might be at variance with the political dimension of social justice inherent in critical approaches to adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning. This requires rethinking the structures, processes, and content of adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision.

Adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision focuses on increasing the ability of individuals to express themselves and participate in social settings. **It therefore seems central that an inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula must play the following role:**

- **acknowledge that language is not neutral or value-free and that standard forms of language tend to position many social groups in opposition to, or invisible in, the prevailing culture**

- **make explicit that which is implicit in standard forms of language use that generally reflect the values and expectations of the 'mythical norm' (Lorde 1992, 48)**
- **be explicit about the power of language to empower and constrain social action and interaction**
- **examine the role and processes by which language is used to construct meaning.**

CURRICULUM ISSUES

To this point, we have talked largely about the principles and key strategies that we believe underpin an inclusive educational program aimed at generating socially just outcomes. There are a number of emerging perspectives on curriculum and curriculum development that will shape decisions made about curriculum at both the classroom and systemic levels.

Concepts of curriculum are central to how the promises of social and academic empowerment, inherent in the work of the field, might be enhanced by educational processes. Ideas about the curriculum, and curriculum development processes are themselves undergoing major change as theorists examine the nature of formal 'schooling' and educational processes within the context of education for social justice. There is general agreement that there are still 'persistent . . . massive inequalities in education' (Connell 1988, 63). Alternative curricula of the 1960s and 1970s, which offered separate and specifically tailored curricula for some groups, were not always seen as furthering the aim of changing the inequitable balance of schooling outcomes. Many debates about the alternative curricula have obscured critique of dominant educational curriculum:

> [which] marginalises other ways of organising knowledge, is integrated with the structure of organisational power, and occupies the high cultural ground, defining most people's commonsense ideas about what 'learning' ought to be (Connell 1988, 65).

Adult education literature (for example, Hart 1990, Foley 1992, and Westwood 1980) also reinforces this idea by citing the way in which middle class biases are perpetuated by many programs claiming to redress imbalances in social justice.

Perspectives on curriculum

The report, *An emerging national curriculum*, notes that adult literacy, language, and numeracy in Australia have been characterised by lack of documentation, limited curriculum accreditation, ad hoc professional development, and poorly developed systems for data collection (New South Wales TAFE Commission 1992). These were recurring themes

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during the consultations undertaken for this project and have also been cited elsewhere (Wickert & Zimmerman 1989; DEET 1990). Adult education generally has not been taken seriously by government, industry, or community agencies in many parts of Australia, and this has resulted in lack of structural support for the field.

The same report further stated that sound adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum development processes and products should be informed in certain ways:

- explicit theorising underpinning methodologies
- clearly defined outcomes
- critical enquiry that is appropriate and relevant so that all students can experience success and satisfaction in their learning
- an emphasis on equity, which informs policy and curriculum development priorities
- high standards of quality via flexible implementation procedures, which address curricula frameworks, common terminology, modes of delivery, assessment, and evaluation
- qualified staff who have access to sustained professional development programs
- crosslinking with other curriculum development processes in such areas as English as a second language (ESL) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), mainstream education, vocational training
- agreement on performance indicators across the spectrum by those involved
- forms of data collection that are possible and retrievable while not being arduous (New South Wales TAFE Commission 1992).

We agree that any consideration of curriculum must account for aspects of the educational process beyond the educator–learner interface. Curriculum is all the learning experiences students have within a course *and* the experiences and decisions that impact on their learning in the course.

Anecdotal evidence during consultations, for example, suggested that although learners may be enrolled in a course of study, unsatisfactory experiences with administrators, other educators, employers, or employees within the learning institution may make them feel as though they do not belong. They experience overt harassment because of their own limited understandings of the new cultural setting into which they have moved and because of the racism, sexism, and inflexibility embedded in many conventional education and work settings. Adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning is influenced by organisational practices and structures that extend beyond the walls of the immediate learning setting. While these are also issues that relate to access into adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, the learning institution's environment clearly has the potential to subvert 'inclusive practice' once learners are involved in programs.

Any curriculum that acknowledges the social nature of adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning will need to acknowledge the pervasive influence of organisational culture on curriculum implementation. This will include examining these aspects:

- how adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs are integrated into the overall mission of an institution or system
- the procedures by which decisions affecting adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs are made
- the extent to which an administration supports the program
- how course priorities are identified
- how students are selected for courses and the criteria guiding selection
- the extent to which assessment and reporting mechanisms enhance further participation.

The implications are that guidance to sustain inclusive curriculum development will need to consider educators, learners, institutions, and the systems that support them in delivering curriculum. Essentially, institutions will need to ask what structural practices might need to be put in place to ensure that learners already inside the institution are not alienated by what appear to be obscure administrative processes impinging on their adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning beyond the immediate learning environment.

There are other consequences of a definition of curricula that encompasses all the activities influencing learning. Adult literacy, language, and numeracy learning takes place in a variety of settings, with responsibility for provision occasionally shared across systems. One school of thought holds that teaching and learning is fundamentally different across systems such as Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) for example, and therefore requires different curricula, even different types of people to implement the curriculum. Another school of thought holds that 'community' and workplace or vocational provision are different, and demands for particular learning outcomes by various stakeholders drive the content of curriculum. This school believes that there are tensions over how to reconcile what appear to be different learning demands within workplace, community, and more formal settings.

With the incorporation of institutional processes within the ambit of curriculum guidance, the overall picture of curriculum development is made much more complex. This requires curriculum developers and teachers to think more carefully about the real as opposed to socially constructed differences between curricula of the workplace vis-à-vis the community setting and to examine the usefulness of such divisions in terms of learning outcomes.

The following ideas that we discuss in respect of curriculum have been significantly influenced by Shirley Grundy's work on curriculum. Print (1987) and Lovat and Smith (1990) offer extensive reviews of curriculum literature but we believe that Grundy's work is of most use to this project since it locates the work of curriculum development within the realm of political action and is explicit about the empowering possibilities of educational work. Grundy (1987) suggests that three orientations to curriculum provide different ways of thinking about curriculum development and implementation. The orientations focus on the outcomes of learning and the potential imbalance in benefits accruing to various stakeholders in the teaching–learning process.

Curriculum as product

Many current curriculum packages portray curriculum as a series, of products, skills, and content to be delivered during a preplanned and often predetermined educational process. Such a process generally predetermines learning experiences. It is predicated on the notion that a quality curriculum identifies objectives, then meets those objectives through a series of planned learning experiences. Once objectives are defined within this perspective of curriculum development, content selection, implementation, review, and other aspects of curriculum development are viewed as unproblematic. Such curricula are often described as 'teacher-proof'. Teachers become managers of classroom procedures, or technicians of the activity sheet, skilled in finding the right exercise to fit the learner's need. Apple (1980) goes so far as to say that some curricula even predetermine student responses. Presumably, these curricula would then be labelled 'student-proof'.

Curriculum as practice

Grundy (1987) suggests that rather than its being described as a product, curriculum can be viewed as a series of judgements or decisions about what will in fact be 'best' for the learner, 'best' in this case being defined by curriculum decisions that are appropriate for the social uses to which literacy will be put. Such a curriculum proposes that 'learning, not teaching, will be the central concern of the teacher' (Grundy 1987, 69).

An approach that uses 'good judgement' as the basis of curriculum development will require some rethinking of the conventional processes of curriculum development, implementation, and review. Negotiation would appear to be at the heart of this type of curriculum, and its central goal would be to meet learners' needs either as expressed by the learners themselves or as latent needs identified by educators who are conscious of demands likely to be made of learners in the future.

Curriculum as praxis

Grundy extends the notion of curriculum as a practice of judgements about what is inherently 'best' for the learner by identifying a form of curriculum as 'praxis'. Curriculum as praxis shifts the focus of decision-making during the educator–learner exchange in the practical curriculum to a form of decision-making that is orientated towards social change, the purpose of any education for social justice. A curriculum of praxis is explicit about the political and historical interests underpinning the judgements made about best action in the educational process. It therefore adds a political and historical dimension to any analysis of the action emerging from individual and practical needs identified by learners.

Some assumptions are made about curriculum that aims to change existing educational and social injustices:

- learners are active in the educational process
- educational work is meaningful to them
- the curriculum has a critical focus (Grundy 1987).

On the basis of anecdotal evidence and literature, it is possible to say that the first two criteria are met by many conventional adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs. But a critical focus may be interpreted in a number of ways. Rather than the cognitive gymnastics presented in many critical thinking packages, critical thinking from an education-for-social-justice perspective requires that knowledge of any kind is not taken for granted. Such critical thinking is based on the belief that knowledge is socially constructed and any comprehensive educational process must interrogate the various constructions of knowledge for the ways in which they limit and constrain people's ability to participate fully in social life. A curriculum of praxis will not take for granted the values and beliefs of teachers and/or the status quo. Learning will involve challenging these values and beliefs in addition to developing forms of action that are based on a process of action and reflection. All of this—critique, action, reflection—takes place within a framework that recognises the social, political and historical context of learners, educators, and the action arising from their work together.

A curriculum that assists learners and educators to make decisions within situated contexts will not necessarily propose equal treatment as a principle underpinning learning and teaching. The principle of equal treatment originally arose as a formal guarantee of fair inclusive treatment. This mechanical interpretation of fairness is, however, in danger of suppressing difference (Young 1990), which we see to be a valuable and inherent aspect of any social context.

A curriculum that aims for inclusivity, that is, acknowledges and makes explicit the complex and interrelated histories of both learners and educators, will not consider the same inclusive practices to be relevant or appropriate for all groups. For example, a curriculum that treats all students equally denies the various faces of oppression embedded in the political histories of students as members of social groups that are unable to be simplistically reduced to description by one cosmetically apparent attribute (for example, colour or sex). Older women's marginalisation and powerlessness may not equate automatically with the marginalisation and powerlessness experienced by disabled women or that of Aboriginal women, particularly in contemporary Australian society (see O'Shane in Jeffreys 1991).

A curriculum that treats all students individually, as is the claim of many adult literacy, language, and numeracy programs, ignores the social aspect of literacy practice, which must accommodate constraints, such as racism and sexism. These constraints actively operate to impede members of particular social groups from actually using their literacy skills (Rigg & Kazemak 1984). The judgements that educators make as they implement an inclusive curriculum will need to be underpinned by sophisticated understandings of what it means to be a person who lives with various labels that position her or him beyond the 'mythical norm' (Lorde 1992, 48).

The implications of this argument are significant for those educators charged with the responsibility of overseeing the development of inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula. **Curriculum development processes will need to pay attention to these aspects:**

- **the manner in which curricula are developed to ensure the process is not divorced from the teaching-learning setting**
- **existing organisational structures and curriculum development processes to ensure they do not perpetuate hierarchies of power and difference**
- **the rules that govern curriculum development to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to consultative processes**
- **consultative procedures that do not ignore the voices of those client groups the curriculum claims to serve**

- **the planning, enacting, and evaluating of processes to ensure a reflexive relationship between curriculum conception, implementation, and review.**

In summary, a curriculum that situates judgements relating to action in political and historical context will also consider curriculum components beyond the educator–learner interface.

A curriculum that identifies learning as a socially oriented process aimed at education for social justice also faces major questions about the overall outcomes it seeks in response to particular demands made by community groups. A central dilemma throughout this project has involved action in educational settings to 'meet the needs' of learners as individuals and as members of social groups.

We believe, on the basis of our understanding of existing literature and our consultations with participants and practitioners, that two ways of thinking about 'meeting needs' might be useful to consider. On the one hand, recent debates indicate there is no agreement on a 'primal' cause of oppression (Young 1990). If oppressions are viewed as separate, but additive, they cannot account for how 'working women [for example] are oppressed not simply as workers but as women workers' (Tong in Jeffreys 1991, 5). On the other hand, within Australian society Connell proposes:

> mainstream curriculum is . . . part of the cultural and practical underpinnings of the ascendancy of particular social groups, specifically capitalists and professionals, men, Anglos (1988, 68).

In practice, exploitation or marginalisation occurs by, within, or across each of the four social groups Connell names. Many people find they are persistently positioned outside these prevailing norms and are often asked to choose which aspect of their 'otherness' reflects the essence of their identity (Lorde 1992). This is like being asked as a project team to remove that part of us which is Anglo and identify purely as women.

We believe that the challenge for educators lies in attending to the immediate needs as expressed by learners in educational setting. Given a supportive and accepting climate, however, expressed needs in the classroom may not reflect the needs and capacities of an individual whose life is systematically disorganised by wider social processes (compare Horsman 1989). Therefore, teachers will be responsible for drawing out potential learning needs that may arise as students move beyond the classroom to articulate ideas or put skills into practice.

Guidance on what might be involved in balancing and tending to these needs must be underpinned by a view of curriculum as praxis: making judgements situated in historical and political context, acting on those judgements, reflecting on the consequences of action, and moving on accordingly.

Day-to-day judgements about teaching and learning will include a mix of product-orientated decisions based on a need to achieve particular tasks within a particular context of social relations. As Lankshear has said:

> It is one thing to argue . . . that conventional approaches to functional literacy negate personal control and critical, informed and rational engagement with one's world; that instead of enhancing control and understanding, such functional literacy 'offers a deeper induction into and further affirmation of the very consciousness of daily life which maintains and reinforces social relations and practices of structured advantage and disadvantage'.
>
> It is another thing altogether to speak critically to the urgently felt needs of the illiterate, unskilled, and dispossessed. Emancipation is doubtless what dispossessed people would ultimately seek. In the meantime, to put it prosaically, they desire to eat (1991 24).

What is central to a curriculum perspective based on the notion of praxis is that its empowering aspect developed through negotiation and critical analysis is not lost in the rush to achieve educational end-products defined and devised in isolation from learners' actual literacy practices.

A curriculum of praxis designed to be inclusive of the values, beliefs, and needs of learners requires some rethinking of the role of the teacher in educational and curriculum development processes. First, such a curriculum will need to be explicit about the important role of adult educators, who also have a unique contribution to make as participants in the learning setting. As they come to each setting, they face the challenge of 'relearning' existing knowledge and skills with each group of new participants (Shor 1987, 101) rather than transmitting already acquired knowledge and skills. Such a curriculum also needs to recognise that while teachers are central to the curriculum process, much existing training generally does not equip them to make the kinds of politically and historically situated judgements inherent in a curriculum underpinned by notions of inclusivity and praxis. Where training is sufficient, the institutional norms around decision-making and work procedures may often work to undermine their individual attempts at inclusive practice.

SUMMARY

In our development of guidance to inform the development of inclusive curriculum, we wanted to present a theoretical framework that would be explicit about its values and would be open to interrogation. The project has faced a number of challenges.

First, there has been the challenge 'to devise a strategy that will achieve ends without further disadvantaging students already marginalised by the educational system (in the way the alternative curriculum strategy did) and without becoming appropriated by conservative or liberal interests' (Reid 1992, 7-8). At one level, this appropriation has already happened with a number of women's studies courses and cultural awareness programs in mainstream education. Such programs often increase participants' awareness of injustice but avoid discussion of the structural arrangements whereby injustice is perpetuated.

Second, there has been a challenge to envisage how inclusive curricula might operate within inclusive systems. What makes this issue more difficult for the adult literacy, language, and numeracy field are the range of institutional sites where adult literacy, language, and numeracy is offered, the varying motives of learners, the varying pedagogies and motives of educators, and our assumption, supported in the literature, that educational institutions generally reflect and reproduce the inequalities of society at large. Many of these same institutions already profess inclusive intentions but are often unable to sustain these promises in practice. Guidance to sustain inclusive curriculum development must address the process whereby curricula are put in place, the content, methods, and resources to implement and review the curriculum, as well as activities such as training and development, and articulation and accreditation of courses.

The literature on education for social justice proposes that an inclusive curriculum is an important component, but only one of the components necessary in laying a foundation for socially just educational practices. Inclusivity itself must be addressed from the standpoint of those it is intended to include. A flaw in many inclusive curricula is the notion that equal treatment or explicit acknowledgement of difference are enough to redress past imbalances in educational participation. For adult literacy, language, and numeracy curriculum to be inclusive, we believe that it is important to recognise not only that adult literacy, language, and numeracy education is a vehicle of cultural transmission, but also that it transmits a particular form of culture.

Inclusive curricula may offer chances to rebalance this narrow selection of cultural values transmitted during the educational process, but as Connell (1988) suggests, there is no guarantee of the correctness of that selection. In portraying curriculum development within the educational process as a selection of prized cultural values, beliefs, and activities, it is necessary to ask not only whose culture is being transmitted, but also who makes the selections from the culture, how and why are those selections made, who benefits from these selections, what selections have been excluded, and what led to the selections in the first place? We would propose that each participant in the adult literacy, language, and numeracy process, be she/he learner, educator, or administrator, might also ask, 'what is my role in making these selections and to what extent do I sustain an educational program that may not be in the best interests of the client group the curriculum claims to serve?'

The theoretical framework for thinking about adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision, social justice, and difference that we have proposed in this chapter is partial. The full range of debate in respect of these issues is not covered, but we believe our discussion goes some way to flagging the complex decisions and judgements associated with curriculum development for inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision. It is clear that adult literacy, language, and numeracy provision is historically situated in the 1990s in what is often viewed as a time of political and economic crisis. While literacy's 'time has come' (Zimmerman & Norton 1989; 163), there are still many questions to be asked about the cultural values, practices, and educational outcomes that pervade existing provision, and the extent to which these values accurately reflect the needs of the various client groups they claim to serve.

Reading 3B

Onore C. & Lubetsky B. (1993) 'Why we learn is what and how we learn: curriculum as possibility,' in G. Boomer et al. *Negotiating the Curriculum*. The Falmer Press, London, pp. 253–265.

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Why We Learn is What and How We Learn: Curriculum as Possibility

Cynthia Onore and Bob Lubetsky

We've been finding it ironic, of late, that with all the talking and thinking and writing and observing we've done on curriculum negotiation, that we haven't spent enough time looking at the concept of curriculum. We have focused our attention on the thorny issues which coalesce around how to build a curriculum collaboratively with students. We have voiced slogans about how curriculum is the coming together of method and content, and that no curriculum is or can ever be neutral. We've worried about how the curriculum negotiation process can embrace all learners and how it can bring together the intentions, experiences, and ways of being of all learners, of teachers and students alike. All of these issues have been investigated thoroughly both in *Negotiating the Curriculum: A Teacher-Student Partnership* (Boomer, 1982) and in the current volume. We worry, however, that we may have forgotten to ask what curriculum might become.

We find ourselves wondering just what a new formulation of curriculum might be, given all we now know and believe, and about the consequences of treating what we teach, how we teach, and who we are as a continuous thread. Somehow, we've accepted that asking the four questions transforms the X in all that emerges as what we want and need to know about. We've focused on the curriculum composing process through the vehicle of negotiation without addressing the ways in which we might need to think about curriculum differently. And so, we wonder in what ways is curriculum transformed by the process through which we build it? Are there issues that we need to address about the nature of curriculum which are not revealed by negotiation as we've been defining it in this volume and in our work of the past ten years? Perhaps, we've begun to think, there are other issues and other questions that teachers need to examine in order to deepen and extend the ways we think about curriculum. By thinking of curriculum as knowledge, or content, or skills, we're in danger of limiting it. But what else needs to enter into our thinking about curriculum?

These questions arose for us quite recently when we glibly responded to a teacher's question about how the pluperfect tense in French could possibly be anything other than what it is whether you negotiate the curriculum or not. We answered that, Yes, the pluperfect would be changed. But what were we really saying? It was clear to us that this teacher might want to question herself about her purposes in choosing to study the pluperfect with her students. But our answer to her question depended upon another set of questions and speculations: Did we

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really mean that the pluperfect would be changed by how we came to know it? Did we mean that what we might ask about the pluperfect and what we might learn about it would form what we believe the pluperfect to be?

And the answer is, yes; we meant what we said. What we want to do in this chapter is to explore the issues that entered into our thinking and build on what we already know about curriculum and curriculum negotiation. It is our intention to draw an enriched picture of curriculum negotiation which will invite the wider social and political contexts into conceptions of curriculum and into places where teaching and learning are conducted.

Critical and Humanistic Pedagogy

Our thinking has been affected by the body of literature called critical pedagogy. We've learned about the location of schools within the larger society and the necessity to scrutinize and resist schooling as an institution of cultural reproduction. Critical pedagogy has sought to challenge the assumption that schools play a major role in developing a democratic and egalitarian society. From the now classic *Schooling in Capitalist America* (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) to the current writing of Giroux (1988), Aronowitz and Giroux (1991), and others (Apple, 1982, for example), critical pedagogy explicates the various ways in which schools reproduce and reinforce existing relationships of social inequality and thereby promote a society based on hierarchies of race, class, gender, and other forms of difference.

Oftentimes, however, these concerns have been addressed without much attention to the nature of interactions within the classroom. While being a 'transformative intellectual' (Giroux, 1988) helps us to see the importance of challenging the inequalities which exist in society, it doesn't tell us much about the kind of work teachers and students need to do in the classroom in order to see themselves differently and to act differently.

We've also been greatly influenced by humanistic educators and the progressive movement (Dewey, 1938/63; Kohl, 1967; Kozol, 1967; Holt, 1964). Advocates of this perspective focus on the classroom and wish to uncover the most humane structures that are child-centred and make central the thinking, experience, and questions of learners. From this point of view, the classroom can constitute a 'time out' for exploration and enactment of social relations which do not exist in the larger society, even though these educators surely wish they would. But we also find that humanistic/progressive educators who have looked closely at the nature of social relationships within the classroom have often failed to take into account the larger roles of schooling in society and how those roles enter into classroom relationships. Behaving critically and transformatively in the world does not automatically flow from a humanistic set of relationships in the classroom.

Unifying a humanistic view of the classroom with critical pedagogy is difficult, but essential, we think. Bringing these two elements together requires that we see school as a contested terrain with competing purposes. One purpose focuses on helping students to see themselves differently and to think critically and creatively, while the other presses on the student to 'fit in' to the job market and into the society in acceptable ways. There is a potential to resolve the tensions by acting together differently and by examining what, how, and why we are learning. A synthesis of the thrusts of each of these perspectives can help us begin to think about both curriculum and schooling. The outcome of this struggle can never be known in its particulars but the effort to change the connection between curriculum and society launches us in the direction of transforming both. We are seeing and seeking a unity between transforming the world and transforming the classroom. It is interesting that society brings together, in a most effective way, an authoritarian view of the classroom and an uncritical pedagogy. It makes transforming relationships among people and ideas in the classroom difficult, at best, and certainly renders a critique of the socio-political context impossible by being its mirror. And that's what we're struggling against.

To unite progressive education with critical pedagogy results in an enriched and problematized concept of curriculum. Curriculum can represent a coming together of understandings of the social and cultural relationships in the larger world, the reformulation of relationships within the classroom, and organized bodies of knowledge called subject matter. Additionally, however, curriculum defines a terrain in which a struggle for social justice can be engaged. Curriculum negotiation, by extension, is a process, a problem, and a project to link transformative social relations within the classroom to transformative social relations in the world at large, to yoke together the cultural origins of students' questions and understandings with the cultural origins of organized bodies of knowledge.

We would suggest that what we want to struggle for is what ought to form the curriculum — that is, how we ought to compose the experiences, knowings and behaviors of teachers and students, as well as how to incorporate organized bodies of knowledge. In the end, the classroom is and must be a place of struggle, uncertainty, and alchemy, with an ever-shifting mix of ingredients and an ever-shifting search for the union of form and content, organized bodies of knowledge and students' questions, understandings and experiences. In short, critical pedagogy and humanistic pedagogy represent ends of the same thread, the thread of school in its transformative possibilities both within and outside the classroom. Classroom curriculum then is the field of inquiry within which the struggles to transform the classroom and the world is waged.

Curriculum as Community

We've selected Garth Boomer's concept of curriculum composing (chapter 3, this volume)[1] as a jumping off point for illustrating one aspect of a humanistic pedagogy of which we've been critical. What we want to try and pin down is not the ways in which it invites students to share in the curriculum process, the ways in which teachers must acknowledge and include learners' intentions, or even the ways in which the authority and power relationships between teachers and students are altered by negotiating the curriculum. Instead, we will look at the ways in which Boomer's curriculum excludes the sociopolitical world from its attention and intentions, how the 'content' of the curriculum is more or less static and set prior to the coming together of a particular group of students and a particular teacher in a real place and time, and how it might encourage student passivity by separating, in its effect, how we think about the world from the way we choose to be in the world.

Boomer literally and figuratively centres learning on the classroom. Children are invited to participate in classroom activities and to define, in a limited way, what their participation should include. They are asked to bring with them and to share what they already know. Others are invited in as audiences for student work — librarians, community members, parents, and other experts. Finished products are to be shared with a wider audience, other classes, other schools, outside community members. While students are encouraged to reflect on their own values, they are also being asked to grow 'towards the stated and implicit values of the school' (p. 44).

What is troublesome in all of this is that there is a limited corresponding movement outwards — from the classroom into the world. We don't intend to limit our concept of curriculum to the literal movements of teachers and children out of the classroom, although there is much to be said for this way of thinking about curriculum activity (see, chapters 9 and 17 and our own example later in this chapter). But we do want to challenge the ways that the focus of attention is on this inward movement and explore what becomes possible if an outward impulse is integrated into the curriculum as well. We think that a key to ways in which schools can operate in order to prevent connecting individuals in a conscious (or unconscious) manner to the existing social order is, paradoxically, to unite the classroom with the community.

Maxine Green (1988) has suggested that we need to 'render problematic a reality which includes homelessness, hunger, pollution, crime, censorship, arms build-ups, and threats of war' (pp. 12–13). Rather than studying math, science, social studies, and language, we need to study who we are and the world we inhabit. This means that we cannot merely accept the content of the curriculum as a set of givens to be negotiated. We must problematize the curriculum. Problematizing the organized bodies of knowledge called subject matter means questioning ways in which subject matter is a reflection of the world seen through a particular cultural lens; connecting these bodies of knowledge to who the learners are and how we act in the world, through our studies, allows us to attend to the social order so that we can, in seeking to understand it also simultaneously change it (Schön, 1983).

One place to begin problematizing is to think that what occurs in the classroom is connected with thinking and being in the world. To treat content, pedagogy and environment as separate or separable, is to separate school from society. To make these connections requires more than bringing together academic and personal/experiential knowledge. It requires framing issues that arise from the intrusion of injustice and inequality into the classroom. If connections among the various aspects of the curriculum are to be redefined and thereby altered, so must relationships between the participants in this process of alteration, the teachers and the students. In order for relationships in the classroom not to mirror those of the larger society they cannot reproduce the contours of dominance and submission, hierarchy and power which exist outside the classroom. Community-building within the classroom, and community-building between schools and the social world outside the classroom, are, for us, the lynchpins of reformulating what we mean by curriculum.

We assume no clear cut questions or answers, or even a specific fund of knowledge on which to draw which can be anticipated in advance of the process of exploration and investigation or in advance of meeting and knowing the learners, but we are insisting on examining who we are in the world. Nonetheless, the essential questions, in contrast to what Boomer has suggested, cannot be set out in advance by teachers. We cannot separate who the learners are and the moment in history we inhabit from what their essentialities might be. And so, we must resist viewing the content of the curriculum as ready-made. We must negotiate not just how and what we will learn but why we will learn as well.

Thus community-building is a struggle about possibilities, those of coming to see ourselves differently, seeing others in new ways, and seeing ideas as opening up potential spaces for inquiry. Further, if what occurs in the classroom is connected to what occurs outside the classroom (that is, if what we think is connected to the ways we choose to be in the world), then community-building has implications for the way things can be outside the classroom.

Community is a complicated notion, in large part because we have so few experiences of it. There is a problem even if we have more experiences of it. This rests on the fact that we are divided in our loyalties between our individual needs and what we perceive as the needs of a group with which we have membership (Bellah *et al.*, 1985). One resolution to the conflict between individual and collective needs lies in being able to see correspondences between the satisfaction of our own needs and the missions and goals of the group. Certainly, communities built on caring, concern, and trust enable us to find correspondences and, so, for classrooms or any other group of individuals to build community requires both a shared sense of purpose as well as consistent expressions of caring, concern, and trust.

As a result, there is nothing automatic in creating a classroom community. But while acknowledging that community building takes time and is a struggle, we also want to suggest that we cannot wait until we have a sense of community in our classrooms in order to act as a community. In a recent article by Maxine Greene (1991), we find a way to frame the process of acting 'as if' and its benefits. Greene quotes Vaclav Havel writing from prison about what stands in the way of his becoming united with others in a common enterprise:

> If I consider the problems as that which the world is turning me into — that is, a tiny screw in a giant machine, deprived of humanity — then there is really nothing I can do. . . . If, however, I consider it as that which each of us . . . has the basic potential to become, which is to say an autonomous human being capable of acting responsibly to and for the world, then of course there is a great deal I can do. (p. 542)

By focusing on what we may become, not only on what each of us is at present, we make new roles, relationships, and actions possible. In this way, all teaching is an act of faith. We act now on the basis of a set of hoped-for future relationships, and trust that in acting 'as if', we can bring these hoped-for relationships into being.

Redefining relationships in the classroom, while important, is not an end in itself. What we can learn from building a community in the classroom is that there need not be a conflict between individual needs and the needs of the group. We may even see that sometimes there are purposes our work and learning can serve which are larger than ourselves. Recognizing those kinds of purposes helps to form a link to communities outside of the classroom. The potential to connect the classroom community to the world outside of school is enriched by a curriculum which brings the outside world in and moves the world of the classroom into contact with society.

None of this is possible if we fail to recognize that knowledge is a social construction, that it results from the conversations that occur. It is only reasonable to prevent these kinds of redefinitions if we objectify all relationships — those among ideas and those among people — and act as though any of them is independent of context.

The Teacher's Role in a Community

The role of the teacher is so important, although problematic, to be sure. The teacher must be able to see 'the ends in the beginnings' (Dewey, 1902/1971). She must recast students' understandings, cultures, and experiences, reenvisioning at the same time potentials for learning. In this way, she honours who her students are in the present while exploring who they may become. To do so requires casting classroom conversations so as to bring together the community and the classroom, and orchestrating a language of hope and possibility as learners and teachers struggle to speak across difference, as they struggle to create a sense of community. This is the teacher's special expertise, and in this way she is not the equal of the students. She may not be able to predict what students will name as their essentialities, their necessities, nor can she predict the outcomes of investigating these. But she knows how to engage herself and the learners in conversations that will bring these to light.

Finding a language to describe the dialectic between the teacher's theories and values and the students' needs and desires is difficult. Miles Horton has created a metaphorical description that comes as close to our sense of the teacher-student relationship as we've been able to find. Horton (1990) describes it this way:

> I like to think that I have two eyes that I don't have to use in the same way. When I do educational work with a group of people, I try to see with one eye where those people are as they perceive themselves to be. I do this by looking at body language, by imagination, by talking to them, by visiting them, by learning what they enjoy and what troubles them. I try to find out where they are, and if I can get hold of that with one eye, that's where I start. You have to start with where people are, because their growth is going to be from there, not from some abstraction or where you are or someone else is.
>
> Now my other eye is not such a problem, because I already have in mind a philosophy of where I'd like to see people moving. It's not a clear blueprint for the future but a movement toward goals they don't conceive of at the time.
>
> I don't separate these two ways of looking, I don't say I'm going to look at where people are today and where they can be tomorrow. I look at people with both eyes simultaneously all the time, and as they develop and grow I still look at them that way, because I've got to remind myself constantly that they're not all they can be. . . .
>
> If you listen to people and work from what they tell you, within a

> few days their ideas get bigger and bigger. They go back in time, ahead in their imagination. You just continue to build on people's own experience; it is the basis for their learning. (pp. 131–132)

Like Dewey, Horton believes that teachers must be able to see two things simultaneously. They must have a clear sense of their own values, intentions, and goals and they must enter into the worlds which their students construct. The hope here is that in bringing each of these visions into focus at the same time, that a teaching/learning context and a curriculum will emerge which represents a cointentionality. It is not so much that teachers have a set of intentions which is opposed to or distinct from the students' intentions, but that a teacher is expert in seeing her intentions in her students' intentions. Curriculum, then, is an enactment of the issues and concerns that are generated by this super-imposed set of views.

In addition to thinking differently about intentions, as Horton (1990) has done, we also want to look at what and how teachers' knowings relate to those of students. Questioning the teacher's role and her expertise can help us avoid enacting and reproducing relationships based in dominance and submission. Many radical educators, most notably Freire (1970), have suggested that teachers must become learners with their students in order to transform learning. Some (McLaren, 1988) have suggested that teachers must be students of their students' understandings and that in so doing teachers may come to 'relearn' and reexperience what they already know. The teacher who, however, begins with the assumption that what she knows is what needs to be known, will have difficulty listening to and understanding the voices of students, particularly those students who have suffered oppression outside the classroom or those who express their understandings in ways which Ellsworth (1990) has termed 'non-rationalist'. By this, she means modes of argument and analysis which do not conform to the dominant forms of expression in the academy.

The teacher's expertise might be construed as 'knowing not to be an expert' (Horton and Freire, 1991, p. 131), and thus how to organize experiences so that students can retain control of the teaching-learning transactions and, further, that knowledge, which is different than anyone's individual contribution, can be constructed. The teacher does not re-experience what is already known, because both the teacher and the student are constructing a new understanding, not just re-experiencing one. The process of negotiating the curriculum is no longer so much a matter, then, of forging links between distinct and opposing intentions and understandings, but organizing experiences which allow intentions to be expressed, problematized, and developed.

Curriculum as Cultural Conversation

We are certainly not arguing here for eliminating any unique function for the teacher. Nor are we suggesting that the teacher lacks valuable expertise or intentions. Rather, we are attempting to redefine the teacher's role so that she might best support students in maintaining the locus of control over learning, their active construction of knowledge, their connections to their lived experience. We think that the effort to engage in these sorts of supports has the potential to make the critical link to the world outside of school by making school knowledge depend for its generation upon students' knowledge of and in the world, by helping students connect who they are outside of school to what they are in the process of coming to know inside of school. This kind of connection doesn't happen simply by virtue of redefining classroom relationships for, as we pointed out earlier, recognizing that social inequality and injustice expresses itself inside the classroom and struggling against it doesn't translate necessarily into challenging social inequality outside of the classroom. The effort to tie what occurs in the classroom to the quest for social justice is enhanced, we think, by continually examining and problematizing patterns of relationships in the classroom, by naming and rexamining who we are in the world. As we are now defining this pattern, it is the very stuff of the curriculum — the ongoing conversation between students and teachers.

To think of curriculum as conversation which composes a terrain of inquiry helps us define another role for the teacher. All members of the classroom community have attitudes, beliefs and dispositions which both reflect the culture from which each person comes and which enter into the conversation. If the teacher must resist the temptation to take control over learning, what, then does she do with the beliefs and attitudes she has? Horton (Horton and Freire, 1990) is helpful here. He says, 'If I really believe in what I want people to believe in, I don't tell them about it. I believe it. . . . Once they look at it, if they don't accept it, then I've gone as far as I can' (pp. 195–196). In other words, teachers need to demonstrate their beliefs through their actions. Beyond that, teachers must modify their vision of future possibility in light of the learner's current beliefs and attitudes. It's so hard when you believe so deeply in the importance of particular ideas or activities to let those go when students tell you that what they hold dear is incompatible. Nonetheless, it's important for us to strive to be sensitive to students' needs and to keep focused on finding compatibilities that can be built on rather than focusing only on resistances.

Above all, we do not wish to set the child, the curriculum, and the teacher's expertise in opposition to each other. There are tensions among the three, to be sure, but they are not opposed in the sense that any of them should have the power to nullify or override the others, nor that they must compete for ascendance. Instead, they must be seen as forces which have the potential to bring to light and to deepen understandings among divergent perspectives, to operate dialectically, to redefine one another as they are brought together. What Dewey (1902) has termed 'seeing the end in the beginning', (p. 12) and Horton (Horton and Freire, 1990) has termed having 'some vision of what ought to be or what they [learners] can become' (p. 98), Freire (Horton & Freire, 1990) asserts as 'knowing man's moment of information' (p. 98). This defines a further dimension to the teacher's expertise, knowing not just what is important, but when it is important.

From this perspective, until you know the learners, how can you know the essential questions? In this way, the teacher can never set in advance the essential questions which will animate the curricular conversation. She can only ask, what is there in this subject which contains essentialities and necessities, not only for the child as she now presents herself, but also for the child as she grows? This requires questioning the child, seeing and knowing the child in the present. The teacher must also ask, what is there in the child which is a living motivation? This living motivation inheres in present-day obstacles or problems which the child could address if the facts and the ways of knowing contained in the assumptions of the discipline were mastered. This requires an interrogation of the discipline as well. These questions and their emergent answers are the essential questions of the curriculum. They seek to uncover who the learners are and how they and the subject of study might grow to relate. Subject matter is thus a beginning, an end, and the means to the end, all at once. Learners are likewise beginnings, ends and means. The teacher must be an expert in seeing the ends in the beginnings.

In order to make links to the world, classrooms must be places in which we actively recognize that, as Marion Brady (1989) has argued, all knowledge is a culturally-imposed structure. What is known is determined as much by the questions we ask as by the questions we don't believe are worth asking. If, for example, the curriculum is eurocentric, questions about why this is the case and how the meanings generated by investigating this curriculum exclude other meanings are essential questions which would be ignored if we focus the curricular conversation solely on the curriculum as given. Therefore, cultural investigation is a critical component of any study because of what culture conceals as well as what it reveals. We want to suggest that learners investigate not only their own questions but that they also interrogate the cultural origins of their questions. In so doing, the cultural origins of the teacher's questions and the ways of knowing embodied in any organized subject matter are also objects of investigation. We believe that these inquiries are at the heart of multiculturalism. Raising these issues creates yet another role for the teacher. The greater the number of voices and perspectives, the richer the curriculum.

Curriculum as Radical Middle

We would like to call this concept of curriculum a 'radical middle', the space which unites the vernacular — the student and the world outside of school — to the arcane — the organized subject matters and ways of knowing characteristic of schooling. One of the problems of definition we have had throughout this chapter derives from the fact that we don't seem to have a language which adequately conveys the meanings we are trying to build. In this case, we will be borrowing our language from Twyla Tharp, the choreographer and dancer. She terms her choreographic style the 'radical middle' because in order to create a new dance form she has borrowed the metaphors, movements and imagery of common, everyday walking and gesturing across cultures. This is, for her, the vernacular. But her choreography is also firmly rooted in the classical style of western ballet, which she sees as arcane. When they intermingle, what results looks like neither one taken separately, although it is possible to analyze the origins of each movement and locate them somewhere on the continuum between the vernacular and the arcane. Nonetheless, she strives always to bring together each of these in order to construct a new movement. What we see is fresh, yet oddly familiar and strange simultaneously. From our perspective, the radical aspect of her work is its insistence that both past and present forms are of equal value. She rejects neither historical nor contemporary expressions of meaning.

When translated into educational terms, Tharp's radical middle seems to us to be very close to Dewey's (1938/63) vision of progressive schooling. Classroom study should be, according to Dewey, an amalgam of the past and present, inquiries which build upon the meanings of history and attend to the meanings of current reality. Only in this way can schooling be both preparation for and enactment of transformed social relationships. The vernacular, in the classroom, is all that learners and teachers bring with them from their cultures outside the classroom and from their lived experiences. The organized bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing of schools is the arcane. When successfully brought together what emerges is a transformed territory of meaning, containing elements of each but not simply a union of them. What results is a space which has changed each of them in the process of being constructed. Not only does the concept of the 'radical middle' help us think about curriculum in humanistic terms, it also helps us to see yet another connection between the classroom and the social and political settings outside the schoolroom.

A Case in Point

Students in one high school where we've worked for a number of years have been participants in this new vision of curriculum. As part of their requirement for graduation, they must participate in community service activities, a nonnegotiable constraint on their learning. What has happened in the classroom as a result of their engagement in working in a local nursing home is illustrative. In conversation with their faculty advisor, the students have shared their horror at the treatment that the residents of the nursing home are receiving from the staff there. As a result, the teacher has taken on the students as her apprentices in making these injustices public and in attempting to change the situation in the nursing home.

As a result, their in-school curriculum has helped them to take the actions in the world which their contact with the world has made an essentiality. The students have participated in discussions with the administration of the home, written press releases about their work, met with political leaders and presented their written reports to them, and have been studying how our society goes about responding to a crisis of the sort they have uncovered in this nursing home. Much of the work the students have done has drawn on organized bodies of knowledge from sociology and political science, to be sure. In addition, their understandings of the treatment of the nursing home residents rests on their understandings of their community. They know more and better about who the residents of the home are, what kinds of relationships these people have with their families, and how social reforms are enacted in their culture.

They understand power and authority differently from their teachers, or from their political representatives. And this knowledge has been brought to bear on the collective actions they have taken with their teachers. Each of the participants has been enriched, modified, and transformed by their collective actions in the world. And, the subjects of study have been brought to life in ways none of the participants might have imagined at the beginning. Even to write of what has occurred in the analytic way we have, distorts what actually happened. Because, above all, no matter how we look at the parts of this situation separately, they do not resemble the totality of what has happened. The totality is a radical middle, a curriculum of emancipation and transformation both within and outside of the classroom.

We certainly believe that teachers ought to know as much as they can about the cultures of their students. But we think that it is both too easy and too dangerous to make this statement and stop. Such a statement objectifies knowledge by making culture into a body of information. What the teachers in the example above have learned about the culture of their students is very much a product of the situation and events in which they have come to know their students' understandings. Even the students' expressions of their cultural patterns are changed by engaging in real actions in the world. They have seen parts of their community which would have been hidden to them had they not had to solve the particular problems that became essentialities for them. In other words, what the students and teachers know about their cultures is an aspect of the inquiries they launched, the reflections they engaged in, and the work they did both individually and collectively.

Coming Full Circle

We're trying to forge a different way of thinking about curriculum by suggesting that the learner and the curriculum be joined, that method and curriculum be seen as faces of the same coin, that past and present hold equal sway over our investigations, that community both inside and outside the classroom be objects of study and active constructions, that community represent both individual rights and collective responsibilities, that critical pedagogy and humanistic pedagogy come together to help us unite altered relationships within the classroom with the struggle outside the classroom for social change, and that the culture of the learners, the culture of the teacher and the culture of the school play equally essential roles in forming the curriculum. And further, none of these unions would be possible without a constructivist view of knowledge and all of them rest upon our belief that knowledge is always contingent and partial.

So we're back where we began: what and how we learn is fundamentally changed by why we learn. The question that our colleague posed to us about the pluperfect in French can now be more adequately addressed. Obviously, we are arguing against studying this or anything else as an isolated skill. About that assertion, we have no doubt. But what the study of the pluperfect might look like if it were part of a curricular investigation like the one we have tried to sketch here is much more difficult to define. We know an inquiry would rest upon the learner's own questions, the group's interrogation of the sources of those questions, the connections of those questions to actions in the world, a critique of its study in light of demands by the school or the state that it be studied, the teacher's vision of who the learners might become through their learning and relationships in the classroom not based on dominance and oppression.

How we define the shared enterprise in which this, or any other investigation proceeds, and whether the conversations provoked by an investigation are growth-producing comprise how we can assess the curriculum. These are also the elements of the situation which determine the potential for changes in the meanings of the subject and in how we see ourselves as learners and teachers. They redefine the subject-matter of study itself. It is that redefinition of the subjects of study and reconceptualizations of ourselves and each other which are our prospects for a transformative curriculum.

If curriculum can be truly liberatory, and we believe it can, then it can become so only by our ability to see the means of study and the ends of study as a unified whole. We must ask why we are studying what and how we are studying to ensure liberation. We have many questions about what this new curriculum might look like. We don't know very much about the ways in which the constraints and obstacles in schools and in ourselves might alter our view. What we think we have is a set of principles which will help us seek and find local solutions to the problems raised. More than anything, perhaps, our arguments are simply a call to action. We know what sorts of actions we'd like to launch but certainly do not know where they will lead.

It seems appropriate to end with Dewey because he seemed to be struggling with many of these same issues a long while ago. We know he had a vision of a democratic society, a world of justice and equality. He says, 'We are free not because of what we statically are, but insofar as we are becoming different from what we have been' (quoted in Greene, 1988, p. 3). We do know that thinking of curriculum negotiation in the problematic and dynamic ways we've defined here will surely make us different.

Note

1 Our goal here is to stake out a different ideological territory and this chapter provides us a needed contrast. We recognize, however, that Boomer presents another view in chapter 20 of this volume. Readers wanting to compare Boomer's current thinking to his earlier work are directed to that chapter.

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2. The literature

Competence and competencies

Definition of competence

The National Training Board (NTB) has defined competence as 'the ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standard expected in employment' (NOOSR 1992: 3). It is significant that this definition enables competence to be measured by the observation of work-related performance. This approach to competence draws on behaviourist psychology (Ewell 1985: 3) and is unable to encompass those attributes and potentials which cannot be observed and thereby measured. Norris says:

> Behavioural objectives express what is to be learnt in ways that make it transparent, observable and measurable. Objectives also define the fine grain nature of teaching and learning, usually in a hierarchical form from the simple constituents of the desired behaviour to its more complex expressions. Behavioural objectives are outcome and product oriented. Operational definitions of competence are handled in much the same way. Competence is usually treated as something a person is or should be able to do. It is a description of action, behaviour or outcome in a form that is capable of demonstration, observation and assessment. Associated with a statement of competence is usually a performance criterion and it is this emphasis on 'treating achievements in performance as qualities of persons' which Short and others have criticised as unwarranted (Norris 1991: 332).

Measurement and behaviourism

NOOSR sees professional competence more broadly than the NTB, as the combination of abilities, skills and attributes, including the capacity for professional judgement, underlying specified aspects of successful professional performance (Gonczi et al 1990). Competence is seen as 'an intangible construct' and its measurement cannot exhaust 'the myriad of personal characteristics' underlying 'all facets of a profession' (NOOSR 1992: 15-28). Nevertheless, the need for measurement tips the scales back in favour of a behaviourist form of competence. 'In the context of assessment, the definition is inevitably behaviourist' (Penington 1992b: 7).

> Professions should consider important attributes, but ways should be found to express their contribution to competent performance in the workplace in a way that will lead to an observable manifestation in actual professional work, which can be assessed validly. Standards aim to facilitate recognition of competence in the workplace and should be written accordingly (NOOSR 1992: 84).

In these definitions the desire for measurement drives the definition of competence, rather than the definition of competence defining the appropriate form of measurement. The Mayer Committee is under similar constraints to NOOSR. Rejecting 'narrow behaviourist definitions', like NOOSR it refuses to separate knowledge from skill, saying that 'competence involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations'. Competencies are not capable of rote learning or trained automatic responses but are 'mindful, thoughtful capabilities', an approach said to enhance transferability (Mayer 1992: 4-5). However, in the Mayer framework competency still has to be measured and observable behaviours inevitably determine the scope of measurement, whether as ends in themselves or used as surrogates for other attributes.

Like those of the NTB and NOOSR, the Mayer Committee's use of competence is also closely tied to work. The Committee says that its competencies are relevant to 'a wide range of social settings', but 'the focus on effective preparation for participation in work is, however, critical to the purpose of giving greater emphasis to these competencies and increased value will be realised when the competencies can be developed in contexts in which links to their application in the workplace can be made direct and explicit' (Mayer 1992: 6). This raises the problem of inference or transferability, which will be further considered below.

The behaviourist aspect of these and related notions of competence has been widely criticised (Kinsman 1992). Empirical observation focuses on performance here and now rather than performance over a lifetime; it fails to distinguish between 'within-college' and 'after-college' outcomes (Ewell 1985: 3). It is a measure of what is rather than what could be. Noting that the competency movement in the United States often has a strong behaviourist emphasis, Penington argues that 'this approach leads to atomisation of work. It is little more than occupational analysis and has distinct limitations even for work that is essentially manual. It wrongly assumes that there is only one correct way to perform a task.... It sets in concrete the *status quo* and thereby fails to provide for the future.... Couching behavioural proposals in extraordinary convoluted language which makes gestures to 'imaginative and creative' functions and 'constructs of knowledge' does not disguise the fact that it is performance in designated situations which is to be evaluated' (Penington 1992a: 13-14).

The objectification of observable behaviours enables the competency-based approach to avoid differentiating between people on any other grounds. But this means that knowledge as such is not necessary to competence, except and to the extent that was integral to the development of observable competencies. Thus competencies cannot stand as surrogates for the outcomes of learning as a whole.

Further, as Walker puts it, behaviourism 'fails to recognise the interrelated and interdependent nature of human abilities. It reduces a complex and interdependent reality, the reality of human performance and potential, to isolated bits'. By individualising competence, behaviourism fails to take in to account the organisational, cultural and social setting in which performance occurs, including collective processes. Walker agrees that behaviourism is conservative, and it fails to allow for 'the role of professional judgement in competent performance' (Walker 1992a: 2; Walker 1992b: 1-5).

Alternative approaches

If behaviourist competence is problematic, are there alternative approaches that might be more useful? Dall'Alba and Sandberg (1992) argue that there are four ways of conceiving competence. To the extent that these ways constitute measurable competencies, their first three categories are inherently behaviourist: competence as the performance of employment-related tasks (NTB); as attributes possessed by individuals such as skills and knowledges and attitudes (NOOSR); and as the ways in which these first two categories 'are integrated to deal with practical situations in the workplace'. The fourth category is Sandberg's own and is used to critique the other approaches.

Sandberg argues that the primary source of current views of competence has been the rationalistic tradition in science embodied in the work of Frederick W. Taylor, who argued that management should be able to analyse workers' competence by classifying it, tabulating and reducing it to rules, laws and formulas which provide a basis for matching competence and tools with the required tasks. Later, this approach guided the influential work of Boyatzis on management.

Other work (for example, Lorsch and Morse) recognised that in order to match tasks and competence, the qualities of the task should also be analysed.

But the problem with all of these strands is that competence is treated as an entity in itself and 'the knowledge of the individual and the requirements of the job are not described in the same terms'. This contributes 'not only to a reification of the worker but a reification of the competence phenomenon itself'. Forms of human activity become turned into metaphysical ideals, for example Boyatzis' dogmatic notion of one correct management competence (Sandberg 1991: 1-2).

These approaches assume it is possible to describe competence separate from the individual, assume the individual and the task can be analysed separately, and see competence as a *quantity* of something - as 'a particular number of different skills and knowledge', a combination of different properties. A better approach, following Husserl, is to re-integrate subject and object by understanding the 'life-world' as always immediately present in our experiences and our actions, so that 'no neutral standpoint exists from which we can investigate human competence as an entity in itself' (pp. 2-3). This means also that

> We cannot split human competence into two independent parts, such as the number of personal properties and the qualities of the task. This is because we are always intentionally related to the world and the world is always intentionally related to us ... to regard human competence as a property-based phenomenon is to overlook the most fundamental aspect of human competence, namely, its intentional dimension (p. 3).

Asking what are the properties of competence results in a focus on 'different kinds of knowledge and skills that form the competence in question'. But to describe competence as 'intentional achievement' is to reformulate the question and ask 'what constitutes competence in the accomplishment of the task?' The 'wholeness of human competence' is constituted by 'how the content of the work appears to the subject in the accomplishment of the task'. Competence can be analysed by investigating the individual's conception of the work, which takes in three elements: the world of the work (tasks and their context), the way of describing this world of work, and the 'meaning-bearing' intentional relation between the two. The intentional dimension of the work is rarely developed in one single experience of the work, but is constituted also 'by a number of subsidiary intentional experiences' (Sandberg 1991: 3-4).

Therefore Sandberg refuses to express competence in terms of quantities of skills or knowledge. Rather, the essence of competence lies in the intentional dimension, in the accomplishment of the task intended by the subject. The key is the *purpose* of the work, and therefore also whose purpose is under consideration. Sandberg's study of engineers at Volvo in Sweden demonstrates that relevant skills and knowledge are learned in different ways, depending on 'the conception of the work, that is, the meaning which engagement in the work has for the worker'.

> The view of competence as conception of the work does not rest upon attributes to be acquired by individuals. Rather, it is based on the work-related experience of the person who performs, or is to perform, the work. Tasks and individuals are not seen as separate from each other. The relation between them is what constitutes competence (Dall'Alba and Sandberg 1992: 9).

The conception of the work is experienced based, but it is claimed that the experience can be simulated in educational settings. 'In the higher education context, this means that skills and knowledge are learned in accordance with the meaning which the course content has for the students' (Dall'Alba 1992: 10). Sandberg says that professionals conceive their work in distinctive ways and these conceptions provide a framework for carrying out their work effectively, and 'developing particular skills and knowledge relating to the work'. These conceptions 'precede and work as a base for all our subsequent knowing and doing ... If we have not made a phenomenon intelligible, then we are not able either to know anything about it or skilfully master it' (Dall'Alba and Sandberg 1992: 8-9; Sandberg 1991: 1-4).

The question of purpose also has implications for the definition of competence. If the *subject* of competency-based training or work organisation is not the worker but the employer - so the worker becomes not the subject but the *object* - then behaviourism, often narrow, comes onto the agenda. It is significant that Stockwell and Associates' survey of employer attitudes to graduates finds 'employers are most interested in the transferable skills and behaviours that candidates display, and less concerned with their attributes' (NBEET 1992: 8-9). For example quantifiable (and therefore behaviourist) competencies are used in employee selection to provide numbers that discriminate between the individual applicants.

The Sandberg/Dall'Alba approach is thus quite different to the orthodox treatment of competence. Given that competencies are often used for the purpose of employee selection, the notion of competence as an aggregate of the individual's attributes, measurable and separable from the work and work tasks, is very prevalent and drives the orthodox approach. Sandberg and

Dall'Alba's notion of competence does not lead to taxonomies of separated skills, or *measurable* individual competencies (and cannot be readily used as a technology of employee selection), but highlights questions of both work engagement and work organisation, and opens questions of industrial reform more effectively than does the orthodox approach.

By acknowledging that there are diverse purposes and diverse contexts Sandberg and Dall'Alba have also cast doubt on the notions of universal transferable skills and abstract workplace standards, and opened the prospect of diverse systems of competence. Work-related competence is seen as specific to intention and to interest, and there are of course many intentions and interests.

For education the Sandberg approach suggests that it is necessary to simulate the work environment and work tasks, rather than using education to construct individuals outside the context of work, according to a pre-given ideal of the 'competent worker'. Competence is seen as always specific to the context of the work, which may include a particular profession or occupation, and to particular *knowledges*: 'What students learn differs in accordance with the conception of the subject matter that they hold. As the perspective taken differs from one discipline or profession to another, the conceptions that we aim for in our students differ accordingly' (Dall'Alba and Sandberg 1992: 9).

Generic competencies

Terms used to describe generic competencies are listed in Table 5 (Appendix 1). These are only some of the terms that appear in the literature.

These terms tend to shade into each other and often overlap, and form many different systems, often used in an eclectic manner.

Definition of generic

The meaning of 'generic' itself varies. The definition of 'generic' is no more straightforward than the definition of 'competence'. The word 'generic' is drawn from classification systems used in the natural sciences, and refers to the more general category of the genus or class, within which there may be many species. On the most usual reading, a generic competency is a general competency. But in the context of an approach to competency based on classification, the notion of general, and its relation with the particular, raises a further set of problems.

Does general or generic mean *universal*, so that the whole of each of the occupation-specific competencies are contained within the generic competencies (say, problem solving)? Are generic competencies sufficient as well as necessary to all the specific competencies?

Does general/generic mean *essential*, so that the more fundamental aspects of each particular competency are expressed at the generic level?

Does general/generic more modestly refer to those aspects of competence (say, communication) that are *common* to each specific competency, so it refers to one part of each of the particulars? If so, are such generic competencies recognisably the same in the context of different jobs? Can we disentangle the common element from each of the particular requirements, in order to find out?

Or is the general separated from the particular, so that general/generic refers to a different type of competency that is separate from the occupation-specific competencies but cuts across them, and may be necessary to realise these specific competencies (such as flexibility, or learning how to learn)?

In practice the term 'generic competency' can take any one of these meanings, and discussion often slides from one meaning to another unrecognised, or takes more than one of these meanings at the one time.

Some problems of the generic approach

This points to the need for sharper and more consistent definitions and usage, but it also demonstrates the limitation of a classification-based approach to work-related skills and attributes.

Mutual exclusion between categories is impossible to sustain, unless the definition of competence is made particular in every respect. Unless a classification can be made more general than that, it has no value, but more general competencies tend to burst the bounds of their separation, shading into each other, containing each other: the same attributes may be general in one instance, particular in another. Analysis is driven in both contrary directions, the particular and the general, in the vain attempt to nail down generic competence.

It is a brave person (or committee) that is certain about the classification of generic competence. By their nature such systems of competencies are bound to be arbitrary, unstable and contentious.

In the face of these difficulties Walker's conception of the general role of generic competencies is restrained. While they have 'meaning and value in all settings' they 'are not necessarily by themselves sufficient for competent performance in any given setting'. Walker says that a move to generic competency-based standards will not be intelligible unless there are 'defensible and non-arbitrary interpretations of such generics in specific contexts: they must cash out in recognisable and defensible ways'. Further, knowledge of the variety of specific contexts must be fed into generic competency development, and they must be open to revision through the lessons learned from applying them in practice (Walker 1992a: 92; Walker 1992b: 4).

Ensuring that generic competencies always remain provisional, with an active tension between the particular and the general, modifies the tendencies to universalism and essentialism without losing generic competencies altogether. The problem with this approach is that provisional, shifting generics have considerably less appeal to employers and policy-makers. Such generics would be complex and expensive to administer, and would be less authoritative in job selection and in-house training. These considerations mean that where generic competencies are used, they tend to become securely lodged.

Norris understands generic competencies as broad clusters of abilities and sees them as a means of distinguishing between average and expert performers, especially in the professions. A long list of specific cases 'rarely if ever represents the totality of good practice', and competence defined in precise, observable terms tends to pre-determine good practice. But highly generalised descriptions of competence are unable to provide an operational account of competence that does not rest on 'situational judgement'. How can generic competencies be measured? 'What is unclear is whether the universality of generic constructs of competence is a strength or a weakness. What is clear, however, is that it poses serious problems for the assessment of competence' (Norris 1991: 332-334).

Transferable competence?

The Sandberg and Dall'Alba approach to competence raises questions about the extent to which competence can be general. The term 'generic' often signifies that transferability has been taken for granted. But if competence is considered to be both work-specific and knowledge-specific then transferability becomes a case-by-case matter.

The example Dall'Alba and Sandberg use is problem-solving. Problem-solving is included in most of the taxonomies of generic skills, whether these are educational or work-related. But each of work (NBEET 1992: 16) and education have specific requirements which tend to shape the problems to be addressed, and the ways in which they are addressed and worked through. Problem solving in physics is not the same as problem solving in history, or mending a lathe, or solving an industrial dispute. Facility in one sphere does not automatically translate into facility in another.

> Critical thinking or problem solving in history differs from that in other disciplines or professions; what is taken into account and the perspective that is adopted differ. General notions of critical thinking or problem solving ignore what it means to think critically or solve problems in relation to particular content (Dall'Alba and Sandberg 1992: 9).

The point is plausible. Another example is communication, the most frequently cited generic competency or generic skill. Business letters and sales presentations are different to academic essays, and the technical and stylistic conventions of one academic presentation may differ markedly from another. Oral communication in an academic setting has different meanings to oral communication in business, which is often a metaphor for persuasiveness and leadership, shading into interpersonal skills. The nature and extent of these differences have fundamental implications for the notion of transferability, yet in the literature, these differences tend to be ignored. Dall'Alba and Sandberg undermine the notion of essential competence, part of a 'primal self' that is readily transported.

Sandberg's point about purpose also affects the meanings given to generic competencies. Flexibility, which can be understood as the capacity to handle unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar contexts (Stephenson 1992: 5), is very sensitive to purpose. The meaning of flexibility differs radically as to whether the student or trainee or worker is the subject or the object. Greater flexibility from the student or worker point of view means a broader range of options and choices about work. For the employer, the flexibility of employees refers to the range of ways their labour can be deployed not by themselves, but by someone else. In certain respects (for example, in relation to the degree of labour mobility) the two forms of flexibility may be in conflict.

It is evident that where there are elements in common between the requirements of one work situation and another, between the requirements of education and of work, and between the requirements of student, employee and employer, the extent of this commonality cannot be assumed and is itself variable and situation-determined. Transferability is possible, and it can be optimised. But it cannot be taken for granted.

No agreed vocabulary for 'generic skills'

Given these constraints, it is not surprising that 'like employers, academics have no agreed vocabulary for the definition and discussion of transferable skills'. Not only are the same terms used with divergent meanings, but 'the same ideas and the same skills appear under different terminology and are grouped in different ways' (Bradshaw 1992: 65).

There are different taxonomies of generic skills produced in education, there are differences between the taxonomies used for academic skills and work-related schools, and there are different lists of generic skills in the workplace.

At work the nominated generic skills tend to vary by context and purpose. For example if the purpose is management, then leadership, decision-making, negotiation and synthesis become more important (Weil and Frame 1992: 46, 67-68). Sandberg notes that within the management group 'different managerial jobs require different competence'. Differing competencies are visible among managers from different branches in the same organisation (Sandberg 1991: 1). Stockwell and Associates note that when comparing the competencies required of managers with those required of professional, there is a stronger emphasis on oral communication and leadership in the case of managers, while written communication, teamwork and computer skills are more likely to be required of professionals than managers. Managers are more often required to be creative than are professionals (NBEET 1992: 10-12). Thus any summative list of generic skills must be interpreted with care.

Requirements at work

Generic skills and employee selection

Generic skills or competencies play a major role at the point of selection into employment, although it is not always clear whether these are generic academic competencies or generic work-related competencies. There is no doubt that employers intend them to be work-related competencies.

Studies persistently find that academic performance plays the most important role in the initial selection of a pool of viable applicants, but after that generic competencies are used as the main ranking device. This conclusion is common to both the British (Pearce 1992: 202) and the Australian research.

Stockwell and Associates' study of job advertisements and recruiting practices among 80 employers finds that academic qualifications are the most important factor in initial decisions about selection, although generic competencies are a more important component of advertising than are specific knowledge requirements. Most of the stated selection criteria take the form of generic competencies, of which the most important are oral communication skills (nominated by 74 per cent of employers) teamwork (73), interpersonal skills (71), initiative (69), conceptual and analytical ability (66), flexibility/adaptability (61), enthusiasm (61) and written communication skills (58). Arguably, most of these are skills specific to interviews; at the interview stage 'teamwork' is assessed mainly in terms of interpersonal skills and stated willingness to cooperate with others (NBEET 1992: 8-14). Strikingly, the interview-related generic skills are more important in final selection than at the earlier stages. Table 6 (Appendix 1) shows this.

The study by the Business/Higher Education Round Table finds that when asked to nominate the characteristics desired in selecting staff, the most frequently cited criteria mentioned by employers are, in order, strong academic background, communication skills, motivation to succeed, ability to work in a team, initiative and decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, and appearance and manner. The main general finding of the study is that both employers and academics agree that in the aims of education 'the general skills' are regarded as 'more important than knowledge' (BHERT 1992: 33, 41), although it is not clear that academics and employers agree on the meaning of general skills. Alan Priestley, Manager of Personnel Services at BHP, says that in selection decisions communication skills, interpersonal skills, presentation and motivation are more important than academic marks (Priestley 1992: 8). Similarly a study by the Careers Service at Monash University shows that while academic results are important in selection, communication skills, problem solving and interpersonal skills are more important in distinguishing the successful applicants (Waugh 1992: 2).

The studies named so far refer to the whole graduate population. Not surprisingly, Waugh's survey on the employment of arts graduates finds that there is a similar emphasis on generic competencies when arts graduates are being employed. Here, again, in selection . decision-making conceptual/analytical abilities are ranked ahead of academic performance. When asked in what areas arts graduates were superior than other graduates, employers nominate communication. However it does not follow that because employers place most emphasis on generic competencies, they rank graduates with only generic competencies higher than other graduates. Waugh suggests that employers prefer 'either specialists with general skills or generalists with vocational training', rather than pure generalists (Waugh 1992: 2, 13-15, 32).

Business need for generic skills

The business leaders and university heads interviewed for the Business/Higher Education Round Table (BHERT) study are in agreement on the need for 'a broad education which will ensure that graduates - regardless of the course undertaken - have high-order skills in the areas of oral and written communication, have well-developed interpersonal skills, are numerically and economically literate, and have a grounding in the study of Asian culture and values'. It is considered that tertiary graduates as a group are deficient in oral and written communication, logic, the capacity to discuss and debate issues, the capacity to interact with people from different backgrounds and experience, and 'to conceptualise projects from broad goals through to ultimate evaluation'. Training specifically for a job is not seen to be the prime role of universities, although some respondents emphasise the need for more engineering education.

> It is impossible to predict future employment opportunities with any degree of accuracy. At a general level, we can predict that future graduates will need to be adaptable, able to accept responsibility and authority, able to work with and under others, able to embrace change and new experiences, and be tolerant and accepting of different values. However, for the majority of potential graduates it is impossible to be more precise. if anything, there will be an increasing need for graduates to be interdisciplinary in their training and orientation (BHERT 1992: 15).

The BHERT also surveyed the views of the business supervisors of newly recruited graduates, and university lecturers, and found that in education, the development of skills in thinking, decision-making and communication is considered to be of higher priority than the achievement of professional knowledge, although 'learning knowledge and skills directly related to the workplace' rank below both the (allegedly) generic competencies and professional knowledge. There are differences: the university respondents give a significantly higher ranking than the business respondents to the objective of 'learning a broad range of general academic subjects', and the business respondents rank learning the practical side of professional training somewhat higher than did the university lecturers. Similar priorities are expressed by the first group of interviewees, the chief executive officers (BHERT 1992: 3-4, 8, 10-11, 15, 21, 26, 41).

The survey of employers reported in *Workforce 2000* finds managers deficient in 'leadership, human relations and communications competencies', and that there is a need to supply leaderships skills to those whose training has been technical more than generic (BCA 1992: 27). In their study, Stockwell and Associates conclude that the skills and qualities required by employers fall into three categories: communication skills, social skills and the ability to apply academic learning to a work environment. Oral communication is the most important area of all, a finding which confirms the results of other studies (NBEET 1992: 17-19). Significantly, neither oral skills nor interpersonal skills receive much formal attention in higher education.

A recent speech by BHP Chairman Brian Loton illustrates these perspectives. He endorses the findings of the 1990 Senate Standing Committee Report on *Priorities for reform in higher education* that while the specialist-technical standard of graduates was adequate, their education needs to be broader and more creative, and encourage better communication skills. 'Allied to the skills which will enable people to live and work confidently in other cultures, we would stress the need for qualities such as critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, problem solving, independent thought, effective communication and the ability to work in a cooperative manner as a member of a team' (Loton 1992: 5-6). BHP's Priestley says that employment-related competencies should be addressed within the course structure. Class presentations and feedback could assist oral communication, shared research and projects could build teamwork, and work experience would have generic outcomes (Priestley 1992: 7-8).

Candy and Crebert summarise employer requirements as follows:

> When employers say they want a graduate who has a general education, they do not mean an employee who is simply 'jack of all trades but master of none'. What they want is an employee who has developed 'higher order procedures' (abilities to acquire new skills and to develop expertise in them; abilities to treat new situations as problematic and reach solutions that accomplish unfamiliar goals), and who accordingly can display adaptability, critical, and lateral thinking. The employer, in preferring generalised rather than specialised preparation, expects that the new graduate will demonstrate the ability to develop specific skills quickly and be able to apply them to new and unfamiliar situations, at the same time displaying a broad range of competencies in only loosely related areas. The new, and highly paid employee is expected to be able to step outside the system and apply, to very complex problems,

> reasoning skills that hitherto have been, at most, latent, and he or she is expected to show a high degree of emotional resilience, especially in times of crisis or extreme pressure (Candy and Crebert 1991: 578-579).

Generic skills in in-house training

In some private corporations, and in the public service, employer's conceptions of generic skills or competencies are built into the processes of induction and in-house training, so that there is a continuum from selection through career development (Meredyth 1991: 169-172). The Commonwealth Public Service has adopted a detailed set of competencies for in-house training and development at all levels. Table 7 (Appendix 1) provides an example of the competencies used in the training of senior managers.

The Australian Association of Graduate Employers' survey finds that 57 percent of organisations surveyed have a graduate development program. Most of these programs were located in the larger organisations and the public sector. 'A high proportion of employers recruiting in the accounting and law disciplines operate structured graduate development programs'. The development programs 'tend to incorporate four main components' consisting of job rotation, structured graduate training, individually structured training, and project work. On average the length of a graduate development program is two years (AAGE 1992).

Westpac uses a form of competency-based training, incorporating 'attitudes, beliefs and behaviour as well as skills and knowledge' (Matchett 1992: 22). In most companies the system of employee classification is based not on competencies but on behavioural types, sometimes matched to 'appropriate roles'; the approach is drawn from management literature rather than competency-based literature (Meredyth 1991: 170). However, the behaviourist form of competency assessment shares with human resource management the use of behaviourism and classification, and as at Westpac, the two technologies are not necessarily incompatible: 'discussions of management studies and of transferable skills use many concepts and words in common' (Bradshaw 1992: 65).

Higher education

Is there a problem?

Heather Eggins' informative book on *Arts graduates, their skills and their employment* (1992) contains the text of a short speech by Sir Christopher Ball, the former warden of Keble College, Oxford. Ball begins with the question of whether there is a conflict between the humanities and the world of work. He assures his listeners that there is not:

> The idea of value is the link between the two worlds and it is the best kind of link. The humanities are centrally concerned with questions of value, with the two sense of the word 'good', i.e. what is worthy and excellent. Industry and commerce for their part are also concerned with value, in the quality of their products and their services, 'value-added', 'value for money' and other such concepts (Ball 1992: 171).

Even aside from the *faux pas* (that universities and business both measure 'excellence' in money terms), this statement is precisely the wrong way to approach the relationship between education and work. Universities and graduate employment are *not* the same: to assume unity of purpose and to obscure the specific nature of each site is to make the negotiation of effective links more difficult. An investigation of generic skills and their possible transfer from education to work therefore begins from an understanding of the specific nature of higher education and of the generalist disciplines in higher education.

Roles of higher education

Summarising the contemporary consensus on the role of higher education, the Higher Education Council says that the three principal purposes of universities are the creation and advancement of knowledge, its application to social improvement, and 'the education of appropriately qualified Australians to enable them to take a leadership role in the intellectual, cultural, economic and social development of the nation and all its regions' (HEC 1992b: 11, 43). Above all, what distinguishes the role of universities *qua* universities is their role in relation to the different forms of knowledge (the different knowledges). According to van Vught:

> Ever since its first formal organisation, higher education has been a social structure for the advancement and the transmission of knowledge. If there is anything fundamental to

> higher education, it is this central concept of knowledge. In higher education systems knowledge is discovered, conserved, transmitted and applied ... Because of their basic orientation towards knowledge, higher education institutions, at whatever location in place and time, all have a number of fundamental characteristics (van Vught 1991: 2).

Similarly, Penington says that in relation to the generalist disciplines:

> It is sometimes argued that the value of an arts or science degree is the development of generic skills, such as problem-solving. While such skills are undoubtedly acquired in the course of a generalist degree, they are not the essence of such a degree. The essence of a generalist degree is the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of a particular field and an understanding of how that field related to others in a particular discipline (Penington 1992b: 5-6).

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) refers to 'the broadening of knowledge, encouragement of creativity, intellectual stimulation, and the exercise of imagination and originality' as the essence of higher education (AVCC 1992b: 3). The AVCC emphasises the role of universities in teaching students 'that they themselves are creators of knowledge'. The HEC says that what distinguishes graduates is 'a properly educated grasp of the nature of knowledge, its development, its limitations, its applications, its life expectancy and the hypothetical nature of much of what passes for knowledge'. The academic unions state that 'the key skill which most graduates should learn is how to manipulate a rich body of knowledge, through knowing the way that body of knowledge is structured and how it is added to'. (HEC 1992a: 10, 39, 71).

'Graduates should have in addition to the knowledge, skills, attributes and values appropriate to their chosen field: an interest in the nature of knowledge and learning; a capacity to recognise the limitations of their own learning and to value other approaches; and a sense of the integrity of their discipline(s)'. This includes a sense of knowledges as *constructed*. The HEC says that graduates should recognise that 'knowledge is provisional, that no answer is final, and that there is always potential for a better way of doing things' (HEC 1992b: 26, 41). In 1968 Daniel Bell said that in the humanities and social sciences, the very nature of knowledge suggests that more than one viewpoint or aspect, more than one form of knowledge is possible, and this provides a special capacity for re-orientation and flexibility:

> When a subject is presented as received doctrine or fact, it becomes an aspect of specialisation and technique. When it is introduced with an awareness of its contingency and of the conceptual frame that guides its organisation, the student can then proceed with the necessary self-consciousness that keeps his mind open to possibility and to re-orientation (Woditsch 1987: 50).

The classical liberal tradition

In professional training the relation between knowledge and vocation is relatively straightforward, compared to the generalist disciplines. Education in the humanities, the humanistic social sciences and the natural sciences is more intrinsically driven than is education in the professions and business studies. Especially in Australian universities pre-dating the mass higher education system of the 1970s and after, it is the generalist disciplines which are at the heart of the traditional liberal-academic role of the universities.

One aspect of that tradition, extended to some degree also to the preparation of some high-status professions such as law, is the practice of university education as the production of civilised and cultivated individuals. 'An important outcome of (higher) education is a 'rounding out', where 'the whole person' is educated yielding a graduate with certain skills, attributes and values - the 'civilised person' referred to by Ortega Y. Gasset' (HEC 1992b: 12).[8] There is a considerable literature on the role of the humanities and humanistic social sciences in the cultivation of liberal sensibilities.

Hunter (1991) provides a sceptical, insightful review of this tradition. Arnold saw culture as the privileged medium in which an 'essential humanness is discovered and developed'. Newman emphasised that liberal knowledge 'refuses to be informed by any end' aside from itself. 'If then a practical end must be assigned to a university course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life and its end is fitness for the world'.

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[8] Ortega Y. Gasset's *Mission of the university* (1946) has one salutary warning not always accommodated in contemporary policy. He refers to 'a fundamental error which we shall simply have to get out of our heads. It consists in supposing that nations are great *because* their schools are good - elementary, secondary, or higher. it is the residue of a pious 'idealism' of the past century. It ascribes to the school a force which it neither has nor can have... Certainly *when* a nation is great, so will be its schools. There is no great nation without great schools. But the same holds for its religion, its statesmanship, its economy, and a thousand other things. A nation's greatness is the integration of many elements' (Gasset 1946: 37-38).

Thus the production of cultivated individuals becomes also the production of social leaders, but on terms and conditions defined from within the academy. In this framework the humanities refuse criticism from outside because they themselves are the ultimate tools of criticism, constituting 'an unsurpassable intellectual horizon' that thereby claims 'a privileged and autonomous existence'. Thus one of the important features of the classical liberal tradition is this *refusal* of vocational purposes or of any other objectives extrinsic to the liberal educational project. As Hunter notes in citing Little: 'within liberal education there is typically an emphasis on personal freedom, but equally crucially a stress upon the autonomy of the educational process, its necessary freedom from the more direct forms of state or local control.... its province is the ultimately unaccountable' (Hunter 1991: 11-21).

Models of higher education

The influence of this classical liberal-academic tradition varies according to place and time, and the degree to which university departments or schools consider themselves to be externally accountable (and vocationally accountable) varies inversely with the strength of that tradition.

In the opening chapter of their *Higher education and the preparation for work* (1988) Boys et al argue that higher education institutions are moving from the 'classical autonomous model' of the self-regulating community, responsive to external influences only on its own intellectual and moral terms, to 'the responsive, dependent model of the institution's relationship with the society which sustains it'. In the dependent model the starting point is not internal 'but that of dependency and sponsorship through which the nature of funding, both basic and adventitious, largely determines the range of activities'.

> In the extreme case, the objectives might be set, or largely conditioned by, external sponsors ... whilst the institution is left to determine issues of method: in teaching, research and scholarship (Boys et al 1988: 14).

Since the early 1980s in Britain and the mid 1980s in Australia, higher education institutions have been subjected to greater government influence on their objectives and their outputs, more opened to commercial pressures because of the need to expand private funding (Williams 1992, Marginson 1993d), and faced with a new paradigm of students as independent consumers rather than the objects of liberal education ('minds in formation'). In these ways external influences have expanded, and some of the old certainties of the liberal ethos have been eroded.

Nevertheless, it might be an exaggeration to conclude that all higher education institutions have become fundamentally different or that all have responded to these external pressures to the same degree or in the same way. The polar models used by Boys et al function as ideal types, revealing more about the competing discourses on the role of higher education than about the actual practices of institutions. Those actual practices lie somewhere between autonomy and dependency in institutions that have long been complex, performing multiple roles in society. Van Vught is probably nearer the mark than Boys et al, where he says that

> Higher education has always had both intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. The intrinsic qualities have to do with the ideals of the search for truth and the pursuit of knowledge. The extrinsic qualities are related to the services higher education institutions provide to society. It is this combination on intrinsic and extrinsic qualities which has helped higher education institutions to capture their important place in history and society. It should also be this combination which should be the basis of any system of quality control in higher education....
>
> Some authors now even speak of a new 'academic revolution', in which the higher education institutions are basically changing their institutional mission: apart from their tasks of teaching and research, higher education institutions now also have taken up the societal task of stimulating economic development. This broadening of the general mission of the higher education institutions has of course consequences for the assessment of the quality of their processes and products. The extrinsic dimension in the assessment procedures is gaining importance (van Vught 1991: 5-6).

Institutional variations

There is a considerable variation within higher education, between the mix of extrinsic and intrinsic factors, the mission of the institution and the clienteles it serves, and in the basic educational methods employed. Weil and Melling (1992: 104) note that the process of higher education can be seen variously as 'one of personal development in face-to-face dialogue with an expert mentor, guide and critic; as a system of training for entry into a learned profession culminating in a rite of admission; as the assimilation by the student of the basic content and essential methods of a specialist discipline as they are expounded by expert lecturers; and as an individual quest for knowledge, understanding and insight in relation to which institutional provision is an array of resources and the final award a by-product'.

One aspect of higher education which varies conspicuously in and between institutions is the attitude to work and the desires of employers, and the degree to which employment-related qualities should be accounted for within the educational program (Candy and Crebert 1991: 571). Within and across the institutions, variations between disciplines are also very important. Some disciplinary cultures are directed towards professional practices, others are turned inwards or concentrate on the formation of particular types of individuals. Variations by discipline are cross-hatched by variations by institution: for example engineering in the older universities is more focused on research and theory, engineering in those universities that began as technical institutes is more focused on professional practice.

The notion that leadership production is fundamental and by implication, *general* in, for example, the humanities and social sciences in all universities is an odd one in a mass higher education system where in Australia there were 121,353 students in the humanities and social sciences in 1991 (DEET 1991b: 24), not all of whom were destined to be social leaders. Meredyth also makes this point (1991: 155). Interpretation here depends on how broad is the definition of 'leadership'; nevertheless, in the liberal-academic tradition to which these statements are attached, that concept is clear. The passage of honours humanities graduates to the upper echelons of business, media and the civil service is typical of the Oxbridge institutions, the American Ivy League and to some extent, the Australian institutions closest to these in status, but it is not an experience which the bulk of the generalist graduates at pass level will share, even pass graduates from the most prestigious institutions.

In this respect in Australia the differences between institutions are probably less than in the United States. As the Higher Education Council points out, in the Australian higher education system public policy has ensured a minimum quality across the system enabling graduates 'to operate anywhere in Australia or overseas at standards consistent with best practice' (HEC 1992b: 12). In this respect Australia has followed the British rather than the American system.

Nevertheless, there remain real differences of role, resources and status between the institutions and these differences show in the varying attraction that enrolment holds for students, and the degree of respect accorded to graduates, independent of their attributes. In each State and the ACT, the oldest established institution (and in NSW and Victoria, the two oldest universities) have the greatest appeal, in most course areas and certainly in the generalist courses. This appeal is largely independent of knowledge about teaching quality or the resources available for learning. It is partly a function of history: in higher education, positional reputation is built over generations and like Cambridge and Oxford, the early Australian universities have a long start. However, the point is that the institutions are part of a competitive positional market[9]: their place and ambition within the pecking order colours their relationship between higher education and employment.

The paradox is that it is mostly those universities whose graduates are most highly regarded by employers that are in a position to most readily pursue a traditional liberal-academic agenda in the generalist courses, an agenda that might ignore the employability of graduates altogether. Institutions further down the pecking order face two, equally problematic choices. They can become more overtly 'employer friendly', while risking their existing status within the disciplinary culture. Or they can attempt to garner traditional academic credit from the rigour of their knowledge-centred courses and their research performance, while running the risk of being forever regarded the poor relation. Although academic reputation also has labour market spin-offs, this dilemma is mostly seen as a choice between academic status and labour market status.

When vocational pressures increase, a greater proportion of academics opt for the latter. As the interviews illustrate, in Australia it has been the generalist courses in the newer universities that have been more likely to embrace the notion of generic work-related skills or competencies. Likewise, in Britain the former polytechnics have been more likely to adopt the goal of producing transferable skills.[10]

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[9] The nature of the positional market in higher education is analysed more fully in Marginson 1993d.

[10] The pattern of participation in the private proprietor paid for Pegasus program provides a proof of this point: polytechnics are the principal participants. See Findlay 1992 (191-201).

Generic skills in higher education

The orthodox position

The Higher Education Council says that notwithstanding the role of knowledge in higher education, 'the central achievements of higher education as a process' are the inculcation of generic skills, personal attributes and values.

These generic skills are said to be common to the different disciplines and while 'it is only through the study of a body of knowledge that they can be acquired', 'they will also enable the graduate to transfer skills between context'. According to the HEC the academic generic qualities include 'critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, problem-solving, logical and independent thought, effective communication and related skills in identifying, accessing and managing information; personal attributes such as intellectual rigour, creativity and imagination; and values such as ethical practice, integrity and tolerance'. They also include the abovementioned understanding of the nature of knowledge.

As Baldwin (1992) points out higher education people talk about generic skills rather than generic competencies. This signifies higher education's custom of defining generics in academic rather than work-related terms, and this custom should warn against too-easy assumptions about transferability. Nevertheless, the HEC's text appears to assume that the academic generic skills are transferable across work as well as higher education, and the impression is reinforced by the text's conjoining discussion of research on work-based competencies, where the terminology for generic competencies is the same as that applied to the academic case (HEC 1992b: 20).

The slide from the academic sphere to the vocational sphere, propelled by the all-important assumption of automatic transference, is also typical of many higher education institutions' statements on generic skills. At one extreme - though this is not the position adopted by the HEC - the inner directed, autonomous and disinterested liberal education becomes presented as the ultimate form of instrumentalism and engagement, relevant and applicable to any and every workplace. This is to turn the classical liberal education into its opposite. Thus there is the long-standing rhetoric about the 'broadly' and 'indirectly vocational' role of generalist courses in higher education: these activities that higher education conducts entirely on its own terms become presented as universally functional for the economy, and more functional than a specific occupational preparation could ever be. But here the 'economy' and 'work' figure only as abstractions.

This rhetoric is both familiar and influential, but it evades the central issues. Channon remarks that

> It is perhaps understandable, however, that ... providers of humanities courses could believe they had discovered a panacea which would reconcile their commitment to traditional academic values with the needs of employers and the new vocationalism. The panacea was, of course, personal transferable skills.... [but] were employers and academics using the same language to describe different things? How were the skills to be developed and assessed? How far down the skills and competences route was it possible to go without losing sight of subject content? (Channon 1992: 2).

Functionalities of arts

A recent article by Hart (1989) on *The importance of the liberal arts* serves as a useful as well as typical example, because of the claims Hart makes about the employability of Arts graduates.

Hart argues that an Arts degree fulfils a number of functions. It is 'civilising' in 'introducing students to the great ideas, traditions and cultural artifacts of humanity'. It is 'humanising' in passing on to students 'certain values of the western intellectual tradition, such as respect for ideas and the life of the mind, the spirit of inquiry, toleration of diversity'. It is 'democratising' in that it encourages pluralism and diversity in 'relative freedom', that it encourages the study of democratic political institutions and their conditions, and it is provided in institutions with a tradition of self-government. It is 'individualising', in that students are able to immerse themselves in 'great works' and ideas, within the 'considerable freedom' of university life, forming themselves through an Humboldtian process of *Bildung*. One aspect of this individualism is a critical and sceptical outlook: 'the final vital function of an arts degree is to challenge all received doctrines, to be sceptical of all so-called wisdom whatever its source may be'. Then Hart reconciles scepticism with tradition: 'the key to the purpose of any study of the liberal arts', he says, is 'to combine innovation and tradition in a continuing re-evaluation of the great texts, fundamental institutions and ideas of the western tradition' (Hart 1989: 69-76).

Where Hart develops a list of 'general skills' common to humanities courses, he presents the list in itself as sufficient argument for the vocational relevance of arts, and the claim about employability is scarcely examined. The skills are literacy, including oral and written communication; information gathering, including library use, critical listening and reading; thinking skills, including logic and reasoning, developing an argument, organising information; writing skills, including deadline management, clarity and concision. The skills are explained in terms of academic processes rather than work. For example, Hart makes the point that 'most of the tasks which students are asked to complete involve writing', one of the features distinguishing academic learning from most workplaces.

Hart establishes the connection to work simply by citing the performance of humanities graduates in management positions at the Bell telephone company (see below), coupled with the assertion that 'when we analyse what makes a good leader, administrator, organiser, planner or problem solver we come up with a list of skills and attributes which an arts education can be very good at providing - skills such as analytical thinking, cause and effect reasoning, conceptualisation, intellectual and emotional empathy (seeing other sides to a problem), communicating ideas to others, and maturity of judgement' (Hart 1989: 63-68).

Skills transfer not established

This might be called 'the happy coincidence' theory of generic skills training. But the work-related implications of these skills need to be made explicit, or the claims about them are implausible. What is missing from Hart's argument is specific consideration of the needs of workplaces: it is not at all clear that 'conceptualisation' or 'communicating ideas to others' are the same in both spheres, so that the two sets of generics really are matched. Also missing is a closer sense of how even the academic generic skills are created. And Hart does not consider the implications of bringing employment requirements into the arts faculty in an ordered way.

The point is crucial: academic lists of generic skills are *not* the same as work-related lists of generic skills, even if many terms (communication, problem-solving, creativity, etc.) are common. These terms spring from differing contexts and often take subtly different meanings to each other. One important difference is that in higher education, these skills are usually understood in terms of knowledges:

> Traditionally academics have often seen the issue of generic graduate skills in terms of the demands of the discipline: knowing the basic tenets of the subject, having the ability

critically to analyse and synthesise, applying general principles to particular instances. Each discipline has its own conception of who is a 'good student' (Lyon 1992: 136-137).

The academic list of generics begins not from what is required in the workplace, but from what is required to perform successfully in higher education. Not only is the purpose different, the technical functions concerned are also different. As Stockwell and Associates show, employers make a distinction between generic competencies and knowledge. But the academic competencies relate mainly to the production and reproduction of knowledge, and the techniques used in carrying out these functions. The differences are glossed over when higher education is being 'all things to all people'.

Purpose is also different. Core humanities such as history and English value student self-determination in the development of the learning program. Boys et al describe history as inherently individualistic (Boys et al 1988: 24; Weil and Melling 1992: 106). If self-determining individualism has one set of roots in the democratic concept of self-managing subjects, it has another set of roots in the idea that universities produce broadly educated social leaders. But the 'free individual' of the liberal academic tradition is more consistent with self-employed professionalism or artistic or intellectual production, than with salaried employment. There, critical and imaginative skills are applied in an environment where the purposes are different: not self-formation but group production; not texts but output, efficiency and often profit; not favourable academic judgement but the satisfaction of external accountability requirements.

Generic academic skills

In an incisive essay Meredyth notes that humanities courses provide 'a range of desirable vocational capabilities including data analysis, computer, archival, proof-reading and media production skills, familiarity with clear writing, close reading and explication, confidence in verbal expression and communication, problem solving and collaborative and independent working practices'. This modest role in skill development is undermined by disclaimers that the *real* goals of the humanities are different, 'fostering scholarly identity, critical inquiry and personal cultivation' ... 'there is a marked lack of fit between the ethos of the academy - with its models of the scholar, the critical thinker and the many-sided aesthete - and the norms used in graduate recruitment' (Meredyth 1991: 119). This point is a strong one, although despite her sense of the different specificities of education and work, Meredyth sometimes slides into the assumption that academic capabilities are also '*vocational* capabilities' (for example in 154-155).

Dunn, Kennedy and Boud identify a broad range of skills produced in science, including the ability to design experimental procedures, to write reports and to retrieve information. They note that while the skills of graduate scientists are often used outside the discipline of science, there have been few attempts to assess these skills separately from academic assessment, and called for better teaching and testing of report writing capabilities (Dunn et al 1980: 239, 243). Theirs also is a path-breaking study; it is unfortunate that it stops at the exit gate of the university. The authors identify skills produced in science courses but like most others they too readily assume that these same skills are transferable to work.

This is not to argue that closer understanding about the general skills and attributes developed in higher education is without value: on the contrary.[11] Jackson and Page (1990: 4-14) have prepared a list of 'competences' that are developed in graduates in their discipline, political science. Focus on these competencies is not seen as a substitute for substantive content. The competencies themselves are knowledge-centred: access to existing knowledge, command of existing knowledge, drawing out existing knowledge, the exploration of issues with the use of existing knowledge, and the creation of new knowledge. But they are not implicit in the academic curriculum and need to be made explicit. 'We cannot simply assume that these are generic competences that all students develop spontaneously. It is our experience that students do not develop these competences by indirection; they need to be taught'. Jackson and Page make no claims about employability, being uncertain about 'whether our graduates do in fact apply their knowledge to later life'.

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[11] Though Reeves (1988: 36-37) makes an nice point: 'competence implies the ability to find successful answers to problems. Problem-solving is the criterion of success. In a striking lecture Bishop John Taylor castigates 'our devouring worship of success'. He questions the prevalent view that human life 'consists of a narrowing down of the entire experience of the world to an answering of questions and a solving of problems. It is the illusion of technique ...if a person or a government or an institution does not solve the problem then there has been a failure'. In the face of the prevailing view that every problem has a solution if we can only find it, Taylor asks, 'Do we dare to grasp the truth that the human creature needs problems more than he needs solutions? We are beings that thrive on questions but grow sickly on answers'. However this report is about policies and is seeking answers , and to pursue the intriguing Reeves/Taylor line of argument further is to stare into the abyss.

From the generalist courses to work

Normative language of generic skills

It will now be apparent that the idea of generic skills common to both higher education and work is at least partly normative, a claim rather than an established reality.

Of course the idea of transferability is supportable in itself *to the extent that* it facilitates rather than retards the transfer from education to work (and later, from job to job). The difficulty is that claims about the transfer of generic skills often run ahead of the empirical identification either of the skills or of their transfer. The more general and abstracted the taxonomy of generic skills, the stronger is the normative element.

At worst, 'transferable skills' becomes a language that is convenient to use at the point of selection, but one that has little purchase in the realities of either education or work. In some respects this normative language about generic skills has even become a barrier to establishing a more grounded relationship between higher education and work.

For example, a pamphlet prepared by the Victorian branch of the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisers provides useful advice to graduates in the form of a detailed guide to the language of work-related generic skills. The pamphlet advises job applicants on how to re-work their existing academic skills as work-related skills, so that 'completing research projects' becomes 'collection and analysis of data', 'presenting tutorial papers' becomes 'oral communication', 'writing essays' becomes 'report writing', and so on. The pamphlet itemises 'skills developed through a tertiary qualification' under these headings: information management skills, research and investigation skills, communication skills, human relations and interpersonal skills, critical thinking skills, management and administration skills, personal/career development skills.

Now this list is an accurate reproduction of the terms used by employers at the point of selection. But the adoption of this employer-friendly language to describe attributes that are academic rather than vocational can be counter-productive, to the extent that it conceals the real differences between the two sites of education and work. Employers may not always get what they expect from their new recruits. They may become trapped by their own culture of generic skills. For example 'design and planning skills' include:

> identify alternative courses of action; set realistic goals; follow through with a plan or decision; manage time effectively; predict future trends and patterns; accomodate multiple demands for commitment of time, energy and resources; assess needs; make and keep a schedule; set priorities (NAGCAV 1991).

Graduates claiming these skills have exercised them in their individual academic work and not in the context of a corporate workplace. Yet it is the corporate version of generic skills that the shrewd job applicant will present - even though there is learning and changing to do before competent performance at work can be taken for granted. Thus the universal language of generic work-based competence begs the all-important question of transferability. This is not the fault of the careers advisers, whose job is to advise all graduates on how to maximise their employability. But if every graduate looking for a job followed the careers advisers' advice, to the letter, and presented their applications in the form of work-related skills, thereby showing commendable initiative and fitness for purpose, this would *not* necessarily signify a general increase in work-related skills. It would signify an increase in skills particular to the process of selection alone.

One effect would be that generic competence would become rather less useful in discriminating between applicants, certainly in discriminating between average and expert performers. A second effect is that the spread of 'simulated' generic work-related skills obscures the improvements in graduates' work skills that *are* needed. Third, the skills and attributes that graduates *have* developed, particularly those related to knowledges, are obscured - and hence their potential contribution to production is poorly understood. A description of graduate attributes that allows the substitution of fictional attributes for real ones must be of questionable value.

Stockwell and Associates (NBEET 1992: 16) find that over two thirds of employers report that their graduate recruits are deficient in such areas as general knowledge, commercial awareness, the ability to apply academic knowledge to practical solutions, written communication skills and specific knowledge. Now at least some of the generic attributes (communication, general knowledge) were tested at the point of selection and were used to discriminate between applicants in a highly competitive final selection process.

The *successful* applicants were the pick of the crop; the last thing they should be deficient in is generic skills.

This underlines the weaknesses in the conventional notions of generic skills, driven as it is by the technologies of selection - the application, the interview, the assessment of organisational 'fit'. First, the *display* of work-related skills can be learned for the purposes of selection, but these individual attributes have little purchase in work or the context of the work (and may not even have much purchase in the previous context of higher education), that is, selection skills are not necessarily representative of work-related skills. Second, every work has its own context and purposes, and fitness for one type of work does not necessarily imply or confer fitness for another. Third, 'generic skills' are pitched at such a general and abstract level that the slides from academic skills to work-context skills, from selection skills to work skills, and from the general fitness for work to the particular workplace, are easy to execute.

The assumption that successful applicants already have the necessary skills conceals the extent to which work requirements are specific to context and purpose, and employers may tend to underestimate the processes of induction and acculturation that are required to maximise productivity.

Differences between education and work

Employers can minimise these problems by interpreting generic skills in the context of the *particular* job context and job requirements, including the knowledge requirements. By understanding the distinctiveness of both academic skills and knowledges, and work-related skill and knowledge requirements, it becomes possible to plot the transition and maximise transferability. To do so it is necessary to prise the notion of competence loose from its usual coupling with selection, focusing on competence as the achievement of work-related tasks in a work (or educational) setting.

Candy and Crebert (1991: 570-592) open up some of these aspects. They focus on the differences between work and higher education with the objective of bringing the two sites into a more fruitful relationship. Given that when graduates enter the workplace they undergo a process of 'enculturation' in which their old learning and adaptation strategies are set aside for new ones, the object is to reduce the difficulties inherent in the transition. 'The challenge is, in the final analysis, to minimise the gap which separates them without impinging on the uniqueness of either setting'. The gap cannot be abolished, but it can be minimised.

This requires a clear recognition of the real differences between each setting, avoiding the use of a common language that would hide those differences. For example there are important differences in the forms of knowledge, learning and problem solving used in work and in education. In work learning is situation specific, whereas in education learning is meant to be broad. Problems in education are designed and ordered, whereas problems at work are often messy and ill-defined, with multiple human inputs, and lateral solutions may be more important, within limits, also ill-defined. Students are usually individualised in purpose: they have had 'an unconscious training in anti-teamwork' (although this individualism might have improved their 'learning how to learn'). It can be difficult to make the transition to 'an extroverted, gregarious team-member who shares the benefits of personal knowledge and research'.

Candy and Crebert (1991: 577-578) provide a comparison between the requirements of the workplace and of higher education, illustrating some of the differences between them. This comparison is set out in Table 8 (Appendix 1).

Candy and Crebert's starting assumption about the differences between work and education is confirmed by the outcomes of other research. Meredyth (1991: 169) finds in relation to the humanities that 'despite correspondences between employers' conceptions of desirable personal attributes and the capacities of flexibility and self-regulation possessed by humanities graduates, there are also reasons to be cautious about claims to a direct correspondence between the person-forming regimes of humanistic education and vocational arenas'. Employers' notions of originality and initiative 'are often attached to forms of assessment and training which are quite different to the range of exercises performed within the arts tutorial'.

The Business/Higher Education Round Table survey of university lecturers and business supervisors of newly recruited graduates finds that while both groups prioritise generic skills above knowledge *per se*, this apparent agreement conceals important differences over what those skills should be.[12] The business respondents' three highest ranked items are communication skills, the capacity to learn, and cooperation and teamwork. But the university lecturers give these items a middle ranking. The lecturers' top two items, theoretical knowledge and the capacity to use computers, rank below the middle among the business people. Here the lecturers' top rating to theoretical knowledge belies other results from the survey, and suggests that universities may not be quite as willing to place generic competencies above knowledge as the conclusions of the BHERT report suggest (BHERT 1992: 28). The results are set out in Table 9 (Appendix 1).

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[12] The comparison between the views of the two groups is handicapped by the way this question was posed. There is a normative/empirical split which affects the comparison. University respondents were asked 'in educating undergraduates in your faculty, what emphasis is given to developing each of the following characteristics/' But business respondents were asked 'In selecting newly-graduated professionals to work in your company

Stockwell and Associates find that the main employer requirements of graduates are for communication skills, social skills and 'the ability to apply academic learning to a work environment' (NBEET 1992: 17). This draws attention again to the differences between the two sites. Communication requirements in business are substantially different to those in academic learning, and business places a higher emphasis on communication skills *per se* than does higher education (BHERT 1992: 29). Social skills are given little formal importance in most courses in higher education. The third requirement refers directly to transferability.

There *are* real difficulties in the relationship between higher education and work, and especially in the transition from graduation to first job. These difficulties should be faced squarely, and not obscured by the terminology of 'transferable skills', and the dominance of techniques related not to successful work itself but to the negotiation of job selection.

... what emphasis do you consider *should be* given to each of the following characteristics of applicants?' The survey team apparently thought that university people (like people in business?) would defend their existing practice as best possible practice.But the habit of university people in contemplating their own affairs is the opposite: they set an ambit between what is (however favourable) and what should be (BHERT 1992: 28).

Reading 3D

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10

Measurement, Assessment and Evaluation

As has been mentioned in previous chapters, evaluation is an extremely important part of the curriculum process. Unfortunately, too many writers (e.g. Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Wheeler, 1967; Nicholls & Nicholls, 1978) have characterized evaluation as the *final* step in the curriculum process, to see if what was intended actually happened.

Evaluation is not only concerned with the final stage of the curriculum process. The word 'evaluate' contains the word **'value'**. Evaluate means **placing some standard or judgement of worth on a piece of information gathered**. Thus, we are continually evaluating in every phase of the curriculum process (Dufty, 1970). *Evaluation, in fact, could be said to be at the heart of the curriculum process.*

Evaluation — the Heart of the Curriculum Process

Curriculum work, as Chapter 1 demonstrated, is centrally concerned with **choosing from alternatives**. Whether we are choosing between different psychological, sociological or philosophical theories to underpin the curriculum process, or whether we are choosing between alternative activities or resources or strategies, we are employing evaluation: **evaluation is at the heart of making choices**. Making choices is decision-making.

The purpose of evaluation is to gather information and to assess its value or worth in the making of decisions. There are many decision points in any curriculum work. For each of these, we require good information in order to make the best decisions.

Formative and Summative Evaluation

Some writers (e.g. Bloom, 1971) have coined the words **'formative'** and **'summative'** to acknowledge the central place of evaluation in curriculum work. *'Formative'* evaluation is information gathered *during* the planning and implementation of a curriculum project, such as a series of activities or a unit of work; gathering information as students engage in the learning activities; information that will assist in making decisions about future learning activities.

Such information may be **diagnostic**. Diagnostic information assists the teacher to discover what the students know about a topic already, whether students have understood the task set and whether instructions are clear and sufficient, or what students have learned from an activity so that planning for the next activity might proceed. In this last purpose, establishing what students have learned, there is very little difference between gathering diagnostic information and summative evaluation.

'Summative' evaluation takes place at the end of an activity or course, and is usually used to establish whether what was intended to happen, did in fact occur (Print, 1987). Such summative information-gathering may relate to what students have learned, or such things as the effectiveness of resources used or particular activities or roles of teachers and/or learners.

Evaluation, then, is central to any curriculum process. To understand evaluation, we need to understand the meaning and relationship of the three key concepts,

MEASUREMENT
ASSESSMENT and
EVALUATION.

Like other aspects of the curriculum process discussed already, each of these has forms that are technical, communicative or critical. **Measurement**, in the manner in which it has been used, is largely **technical** in nature and used for the purposes of control. Examples of technical measurement are the external examinations conducted by state education systems for final year secondary students each year in which students are competitively ranked on the basis of what they are able to write during the examinations.

While there are forms of *assessment and evaluation* which are also technical, they are more likely, especially more recently, *to have the interests of communication and interpretive understanding*. In the final part of the chapter, we will consider the features of assessment and evaluation which act in the interests of critical reflection and emancipation for participants.

Measurement

Measurement is concerned with gathering information about what people think, feel and can do. Unfortunately, most measurement of students takes place using written forms. As we have already seen, there are many things that we know, and ways of knowing them, that cannot be measured in written forms.

In education, we make *measurements of students' work, teachers' work and the impact of such things as resources, courses and curriculum.* Measurement is concerned with **making comparisons against some established scale**. For example, parents often measure the height of their children as they grow up. To do this they use a ruler marked in centimetres and metres.

Often, measurement uses a **numerical** score; this happens when a student correctly answered 8 out of ten examples in Mathematics, or scored 80/100 on the class test in Textiles and Design. This is not always so, however. When we, as teachers, put a comment on a student's paper, such as:

> *"Good work Jenny. You answered the question in a critical way, making good use of references. Your writing was tight and you chose words carefully to say what you meant. I think you could have expanded Section B though",*

we are also making a measurement of Jenny's work, not in a numerical sense, although such a comment may lead to a numerical mark, but **as a measurement against the ideal answer of which we have an image in our mind.**

Thus, measurement may be numerical or non-numerical, but it is a way to gather information which is at the heart of the evaluation process. We can gather information in a variety of ways such as:

- observation;
- testing;
- having students complete tasks;
- having students write about ideas;
- using rating scales;
- talking with others.

We can gather this information from the students, from other teachers, from parents and from others, such as counsellors or social workers and employers.

Most important, our information-gathering processes must be **systematic, valid and reliable**.

Reliability

In talking to the person next door, we might gather some information about what the next-door neighbour's dog does or whether the movie that is showing at the local cinema is worth seeing. This information is useful as long as we remember that it is the opinion of one person who might not like the next-door neighbour's dog but loves Westerns! **There is no guarantee that the information is valid or reliable.** It has been gathered in one conversation from one person. As such, it is not very useful.

If we want information to be useful, we must be *systematic* in the way we gather it. It must also be *reliable* information.

Information is more likely to be reliable if it is **gathered on more than one occasion**. In fact, within reason, the more times we collect information about something or someone, the more reliable it is likely to be. Likewise, the **more ways** that we gather such information, the higher its reliability is likely to be. Thus, if we are trying to arrive at a judgement as to how well a student has developed writing skills, we should **systematically** gather a **variety** of the student's writing (e.g. composition, essays, poetry, notes) , completed in **different situations** (e.g. at school; at home; in a test situation; not under pressure) over a period of time.

Reliability can be considered in two ways. First, if we gather the *same information from the same group of people on two different occasions,* if our data-gathering techniques are reliable, we would expect the information gathered on the two occasions would be very similar or the same. Thus, if we measured how far a group of six students could run in a five-minute period and we then measured the same thing two weeks later, we would expect that, if our information-gathering was reliable, the students would run fairly similar distances as they did the first time. Similarly, if we gave a test to a class of students and gave them the same test a month later, we would expect their results to be fairly similar. The second sense of reliability is essential to ensure this.

The second sense of reliability is concerned with the *judgements by a group of people on a piece of work.* Let us imagine that we have a bundle of thirty essays and five markers to rank them. It is a well known fact that essay marking is very **subjective** and an essay to which one marker gives 8/10, a second marker may give only 2/10. In fact, the **intermarker reliability** in subjects such as History and English may be as low as 3/10 — in other words, in only 3 out of 10 cases do the markers agree about the student's mark! *This problem with reliability increases as what we are trying to measure becomes more ambiguous,* as the ways of knowing something reside in the knower more than the measurer. Imagine, for example, measuring someone else's ability to meditate!

If we want information to be reliable, we have to make sure that the markers are assigning similar marks to essays which are similar in quality.

How can we do this? We will come to consider this in detail when we discuss *assessment.*

Validity

The other important characteristic of information that will help us to make the best decisions is **validity**. Validity concerns the accuracy with which we actually gather the information that we think we are gathering. For example, let us assume that we are trying to measure how much a student knows about rivers in Geography. We set a question that asks for a description of a river valley in China. Our student, however, is someone who was not born in Australia and whose first language is not English. He/she cannot read English very well and has difficulty writing in English. Thus, it is difficult for her/him to know what the question is asking. It is also difficult for her/him to write down ideas about the river valley. The result, of course, is that this student will not score very high marks on the question. Is the question valid, however? Are we really testing this student's knowledge of Geography? No, we are not! In fact, in this task, we are really measuring the skill that students have in reading, comprehension and expressing ideas in writing. The final irony would be if the student was born in China and lived in the river valley we are asking him/her to describe!

Our education systems in Australia, or any other country, reflect a particular *ideology*, a particular set of *perceptions, values, beliefs and practices*. These are what are reinforced in our schools, sometimes unconsciously, but always powerfully. Students whose lives reflect this ideology usually feel comfortable at school, see their experience reinforced at school and are usually those who perform well at school. There are many, maybe a majority of our students, for whom this ideology, this **hidden curriculum** (Seddon, 1983) is not part of their experience outside school. Such students are those who come from a different racial or ethnic background or whose first language is not English. They are students from homes in which one parent (or both) is a blue-collar worker (Connell et al., 1982) or, more recently, unemployed. They are Aboriginal students (Gayle et al., 1987) and people with disabilities. For these students, the ideology, the ideas, the beliefs and practices reinforced in schools are often foreign, alienating and confusing.

For all these students, there is a potential validity problem about the information that we, as teachers, collect and the decisions that are then made. Just the fact that nearly all of our gathered information relies on writing in English presents a validity problem for information gathered from students whose first language is not English. The same applies to those who have difficulty in the written expression of their ideas, as opposed to talking about them, drawing or making images of them.

In addition, there is also a *validity problem in assuming that all knowledge and knowing*, or the most important knowledge and knowing, *can be demonstrated through written forms*, or even demonstrated at all. As we have suggested in previous chapters, some of the most important things that we know and learn defy being written down or even expressed in language.

Another validity issue is making sure that we gather information about the *full range of material that has been learned*. For example, let us say that a course we are teaching has six topics, ten key concepts and six skills. If we are gathering information about how well students have achieved in this course, then we must ensure that we *gather information about each of the topics, concepts and skills.*

Measurement, then, is about gathering information about what people think and what they can do. It is information on which decisions will be made. The information may be in *quantitative* or *qualitative* terms, or both. The measurement is usually undertaken against some *standard or scale*, even if this is not explicit. The most important criteria for measurement, given that it will always be subjective, is that it is systematically gathered and reliable and valid. With the current structure and practices of schools, the beliefs and perceptions underlying curricula, the student population and the dynamic and complex nature of knowing, there are many problems in ensuring that our measurements of students' ability and learning are reliable and valid.

Although it is possible for measurement to involve those being measured as participants in the process, by using such things as student self-reports, *measurement is usually what someone else does to the persons being measured.* The best example of this is testing. In the early days of evaluation, testing was the major form. Programs, courses and curricula were judged to be effective or not on the basis of students' test scores.

Assessment

Assessment is placing an *interpretation on measurement information.* This suggests that assessment comes after the information has been collected. Such separation is sometimes true (e.g. in an external examination when all students sit for their papers and the papers are then marked by a group of markers outside the school) but, often, assessment is occurring simultaneously with the measurement process (e.g. a teacher observing a number of students' oral performances is making interpretive judgements while the measurement is taking place). Furthermore, the suggestion of separation of measurement and assessment denies the fact that *all measurement is itself subjective and rests upon interpretive judgement.*

Assessment is basically concerned with *assigning a mark, a rank, a grade, or some qualitative comment to measurement information.* Thus, assessment has a sense of *comparison*: comparison of the information derived from the measurement of one student with measurements from other students; comparison of a student with her/himself at some other time; comparison with an ideal or faultless response.

The assignment of a mark, grade or rank may be in **quantitative** terms, such as '70/100', or '10th', or '15th percentile'; or it may be in **qualitative** terms, such as 'Distinction' or 'this was an excellent piece of work'. It may be presented orally, as does an adjudicator in a debate, or diagramatically/graphically, but usually in some written form.

The *form of presentation depends* very much on the nature of what is being measured and assessed. It depends *on how we come to know something and prove that we know it.* This was discussed in Chapter 6. Technical knowing can be measured and assessed in technical ways, using multiple choice tests, for example. Knowledge which relies on interpretive understanding must be negotiated through spoken or written language. Knowledge which is 'knowing inside' may not be able to be expressed at all, like our meditation example.

The assignment of a mark, grade or rank means little on its own. Consider the following. Susie scored 56/100 on her test in Technics. What does this mean? If the class average on the test was 47/100, then Susie has done fairly well in comparison to the other students. If, however, the class average was 65/100, then Susie did not do as well — but if we add that, in her last test on the same topic, Susie only scored 28/100 — then, compared to her last result, Susie has scored 100% better.

Thus, *assessment provides a context in which to consider the information collected from the measurement procedure.* For example, let us consider two student teachers placed in schools for their practicum. One goes into a school where there are no classroom management problems and the staff is very supportive. The second student goes into a school which has massive classroom and school management problems and where the morale of the staff is low and teachers are not supportive. Both students are awarded Highly Satisfactory results. Is their teaching and their performance in these two settings, however, of equal standard and merit? Does the context tell us anything about the way these results should be interpreted?

Similarly, at the present time, in a number of countries, there are moves towards national testing and the publication of the results of the tests so community people can see which are the best schools. An important consideration is the raw material that goes into each of these schools. Consider one school that is in a socio-economically depressed area with few resources and students who are not highly motivated about school. This school, in the national tests, scores as well as a neighbouring school in an affluent area with many resources and students who are highly motivated. Surely, in assessing the test results of these two schools, we would want to suggest that the first school has performed better than the second, given the contexts in which they are located.

Assessment procedures may be used to make judgements and decisions about students, teachers or courses, resources and curricula. In doing this, we usually use three different types of comparisons, **norm-referenced, criterion-referenced,** and **goal-based.**

Norm-referenced Assessment

Norm-referenced assessment *compares the performance of one student with another using the same measuring device and attempting to keep the contexts in which the information has been gathered as similar as possible.* There are probably two forms of norm-referenced assessment that we should consider. The first is an *external examination.* For example, the Higher School Certificate, in some states of Australia, measures the performance of all final year students in a subject using the same paper, sat for on the same day, at the same time, with the same conditions of weather and social circumstance, and then assessed by the same group of examiners.

The second form of norm-referenced assessment is *standardized tests.* Standardized tests are measuring devices which have been normed on one population and then used to measure the performance of another similar population. For example, if we wanted to develop a test for students of various ages dealing with number skills, we could develop a whole series of questions of increasing difficulty to do with number skills. We could then take large samples of different age pupils and ask them to provide answers to the questions. The samples would have to be large enough to be **representative of all the students**, say, of seven years of age, in a particular country or society and representative of such things as race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, geographical context and urban/ rural location. After we had collected our information, we would then see how many of our questions children of five years of age, six years of age, seven years of age, and so on, were able to answer correctly. The correctly answered questions would then become the norm for six year-olds, seven year-olds, and so on. We could then use the questions to measure how well other students, **of similar background**, could perform in relation to our original population. Thus, if we tested a seven year-old with our test, we would expect her/him to be able to answer the same questions as the seven year-olds in our original sample.

The notion of norm-referencing, and the levels of reliability and validity of any particular test, depend on *the degree to which the population on which the test is used is similar to the population that was originally used to norm the test.* For example, in Australia, we are still using psychological tests that were normed on American students in the 1950s! The problems of reliability and, especially, validity of the test in this situation are very great. More recently, a test, developed in Australia and given to Year 3 and Year 6 students, did not include one drawing of any race or ethnic group other than white Anglo-Saxons!In addition, the test discriminated against the most likely responses from Australian Aboriginal students to a multiple choice question, because the so-called 'correct' answer derived from a white cultural view of the world. Evidence suggests that, in both the United States and Australia, norm-referenced tests discriminate against learners who are members of cultural minority groups.

Norm-referenced assessment is technical and has, as its main interest, control. Usually those being assessed have no part in the assessment process nor in the interpretation of the information gathered. Technical assessment provides the *opportunity for those who are in control of the assessment process to control also the information or knowledge that counts as correct, even when the judgement as to what is the correct answer is highly problematical or when there are a number of possible correct answers.* This is well illustrated in externally controlled examinations, where the instruction provided is to 'identify *the most* correct answer'. What this really means is, 'guess what the markers think are the correct answers'!

Criteria-referenced Assessment

In the case of criteria-referenced assessment, *comparison is being made against an established set of criteria.* Such criteria may relate to the *content* of the material measured (e.g. make a list of five concepts associated with the topic, Magnetism) and/or the *process* of arriving at the result (e.g. Place a magnet under a piece of blank paper and sprinkle iron filings over it. Draw a diagram of the pattern of the iron filings). Thus, criteria could be used to assess the final product, such as a table or canoe in Technics or a cake in Home Science. Criteria could also be used to assess the performance of the students as they were making the products.

Criteria may be developed for any assessment task, although, for some tasks, this is easier than for others. For example, to develop criteria to assess whether someone is able to throw a ball, or build a table, is quite different from developing a set of criteria for judging the quality of someone's artistic or musical performance. Again, this goes back to the different ways we know things and prove that we know them. No matter which way of knowing we are dealing with, however, *the specification of criteria is a subjective matter.* Sometimes, there is a high degree of agreement between people about what criteria for a task should be, or there is really only one way to do something. In these cases, the specification of criteria is easier than when there is no agreement about the criteria needed to demonstrate effective performance. Again, with knowledge that derives from 'knowing inside', it may be impossible for anyone other than the knower to specify the criteria.

If we are not using norm-referenced criteria, then, whether we are aware of it or not, we are using criteria-referenced assessment, even if the criteria are not specified. Each time *we make a judgement, we are judging against a set of criteria,* albeit, often unspoken. For example, when we ask a question to a student and receive an answer, we immediately weigh up the degree to which the answer fits with the answer that we were expecting; in judging a piece of writing, a poem, an essay, or an oral or artistic performance, we are measuring it against an ideal, a set of criteria that we are unconsciously using. *This unexplained, non-explicit, unconscious use of criteria is a very powerful way of controlling our students, as well as the knowledge that is legitimated or rejected in classrooms and by measurement and assessment processes.* It is very important that, if our assessment processes are to be fair and just, as well as accurate, reliable and valid, the criteria that we use must be *explicit and consciously used. Being explicit in our assessment criteria means that, as teachers, we are forced to think more deeply and carefully about our work so that our students know on what grounds they are being assessed.*

Being explicit is very important in ensuring reliability. As stated above, there are numerous measurement forms (e.g. essays, performances, artistic forms) that are highly subjective in their assessment and for which the problem of ensuring inter-marker reliability is potentially great. There are some procedures that, if followed, can assist in making sure that reliability is enhanced. They are as follows:

1. Look at the sample of the forms to be assessed (e.g. essays, paintings; cakes) to get some idea of the range of quality of the responses.
2. Specify as clearly and explicitly as possible the criteria to be used to measure the quality of the work, keeping in mind the quality of the responses.
3. Have one group of people only assessing each question, or mark all of one question before proceeding to the next one.
4. Discuss with one another, after assessing a few sample responses, to make sure that everyone understands the meaning of the criteria, and is applying them in the same way.
5. Periodically, during the assessing process, have all of the assessors mark the same paper(s) as a check that they are still applying the criteria in the same way.
6. If possible, have every response assessed by two assessors.

Although it is possible for students to be engaged in a criterion-referenced assessment system, and be participants in negotiating the criteria and the assessment process, it is more often the teacher who does this. Thus, although criteria-referenced assessment is concerned with an interest in interpretive understanding, it is usually not owned collaboratively with the students. Goal-based assessment, on the other hand, does involve the students in the negotiation of the outcomes and the process.

Goal-based Assessment

Goal-based assessment is usually a *school-based, or teacher-based, form of assessment.* There are many varieties of goal-based assessment, however, there are some key principles and assumptions which underlie the concept and its practices (Victorian Non-Government Participation & Equity Program Committee, 1986).

Goal-based assessment involves, to varying degrees, *collaboration and negotiation between teacher and student.* Very often, the degree of negotiation is dependent upon the system and school frames (see Chapter 9) which a teacher perceives are restricting his/her decision-making space.

For example, a teacher in Mathematics, both because of the nature of the subject and because of the prescriptive syllabus issued by the system, may perceive there is less room to negotiate than a teacher in Music or Art.

Usually, the *teacher,* sometimes with the students, bearing in mind all of the frames and frame factors that are present, *establishes the goals that must be achieved by a student* in a topic, unit of work or course. The goals will be broad and will leave some, or a great deal of, room for negotiation. Thus, a teacher may set the following goals for a unit on Writing:

> *"Each student will submit four pieces of writing including a transactional piece of writing, a creative piece of writing and a poem."*

Such a goal leaves the *specific details* of the writing pieces *to be decided either by the students themselves or in negotiation with the teacher.* Such details include the themes of the writing, their length, when and in what order they will be completed, and which ones, out of all the pieces of writing that are completed during the unit, will be selected to be submitted. *This process of assessment then sees the students as participants in decisions about their own learning and as co-owners of the assessment process.*

The contract concerning the exact details of the pieces of writing and the criteria by which they will be judged are negotiated and agreed to by both teacher and student. The student then proceeds to complete the tasks as agreed. Of course, sometimes, there is the need for some renegotiating as the tasks and their completion unfold.

When the tasks have been completed, there is negotiation and feedback concerning how well the tasks were completed in relation to the criteria that were established. During this phase, there is, again, *negotiation and co-operation between teacher and student.*

Goal-based assessment takes time. It takes time for the teacher and the student to gain the skills that are necessary in the new situation. Sometimes, there needs to be special courses to develop the skills. The process of negotiation (Boomer, 1982), at each stage of the teaching/learning process, also takes time. *Evaluations of goal-based assessment suggest that this time is well spent* (PEP, 1985). First, students are *more motivated and interested in work in which they perceive they have some control and ownership.* Because of this motivation, they are more likely to complete the work and complete it quickly. This seems to be particularly the case with students who are not motivated by traditional ways of teaching. Second, students are *learning the skills of learning and how they, as individuals, learn.* There is much talk in education today about students 'learning how to learn', learning the skills and processes by which they learn. Goal-based assessment increases this possibility. Third, there are changes in the relationships between teacher and learner; *learners' ideas and wants become important. The student becomes a collaborator in her/his own learning and assessment process.* The teacher, rather than being 'expert', becomes a facilitator and mentor for the student.

With goal-based learning, *assessment is no longer a tool used by those wanting control and power over the student.* Assessment, instead, becomes a collaborative, negotiated process between teacher and student. Meanings are negotiated towards interpretive understanding by both teacher and student, and, in its ideal form, *goal-based assessment provides the potential to act as a liberating process for student and teacher*, to make both of them more critically aware of the teaching/learning process.

The same principles can be applied to teacher assessment and appraisal. In this form, the goals of the teacher are negotiated with supervisor or peer, and a program of professional self-development arrived at for a designated period of time. Progressively, and at the end of the period, the work towards the goals is reviewed. Again, depending upon the degree of ownership of the process by the teacher, such professional development has the power to act as a liberating force for those involved. At its ideal, such a process approaches very closely to collaborative and critical action research which has been introduced in Chapter 9 and will be more fully discussed in Chapter 11.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the *overarching concept which both depends upon measurement and assessment, and brings together a number of measurements and assessments to make a composite judgement or decision.* Thus, a particular student undergoes a number of measurement tasks throughout the year in a number of subjects and these measurements are interpreted through one or more assessment procedures. At the end of the year, all of these individual interpretive judgements are brought together in an annual report. Such a report could be considered an evaluation.

An evaluation can be undertaken with *students, with teachers, with resources or programs/courses in a single subject, a group of subjects* (e.g. the Social Sciences) *or a whole-school.* In evaluating courses or programs, we would be integrating measurement and assessment information from students and teachers, along with other information from these people, and others, such as parents, as well as information about the context in which the program is located. *Evaluation, then, usually uses more information than that derived only from student assessment.*

Evaluation can take different forms and, like assessment, may have each of the three interests. Which interest is being served depends very much on the type of information being used in the evaluation, as well as the degree of collaborative negotiation involved in the evaluation and the degree of ownership by those participating in the evaluation.

Until the 1960s, evaluation was practically synonomous with student test scores (Bates, 1988). Thus, the effectiveness of programs and the success of resources were measured by how well students performed on tests. Such a view of evaluation was purely technical. It had no interest in negotiating the meaning or understanding of the impact of programs or resources with participants. Furthermore, it did not take into account that outcomes of a learning situation might be very different from the objectives and that the difference, if there was one, might be worthwhile (Stenhouse, 1975). Evaluation was based on the objectives model that we have critiqued in Chapter 7.

During the 1960s and '70s, the scope and field of evaluation broadened considerably. Evaluators became interested not only in outcomes but also intentions and the gaps between these. Increasingly, it was realized that, especially in education, evaluation often meant trying to develop an accurate picture of what was happening in an educational context. Thus, evaluators moved to develop portrayals of educational settings (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) as a way of evaluating the impact of programs or resources. More recently, evaluators such as Eisner (1979; 1982) have suggested that educational evaluators are connoisseurs and are responsible for developing accounts that not only describe, but offer expert-based, interpretive critique.

What is important in both of these approaches is the fact that they both *leave control of the evaluation in the hands of the evaluators, not the participants.* Although the participants may provide data, it is the evaluators who are left to construct the meanings and interpretations embedded in the evaluation.

An evaluation is of little worth if it is not reliable or valid. What was recognized from these attempts at developing accounts of educational contexts was that, very often, the meanings and interpretations constructed by the evaluators were not accurate representations of the perceptions of the participants. If the evaluator was seen as someone who was attempting to provide an accurate, authentic and honest account, then it was impossible for the evaluator to construct this without the participants. There is no *one* reality of a situation, as we have seen. There are many, one for every participant. If the evaluator's role was to be an honest broker, then she/he needed to base the evaluation in the meanings and perceptions of the situation, negotiated with the various participants. This negotiation of meaning is not only of the information collected, but how that information is interpreted in the context and used in any written report (Smith, 1988).

To ensure reliability and validity of evaluative information from educational contexts which are highly ambiguous and complex, and in order to make the best and most informed educational decisions, evaluation has moved from having a purely technical interest to one based upon negotiated meaning and interpretation, in which the participants are centrally involved.

More recently, there have been moves to develop evaluation approaches and processes which are critically reflective in nature and which have, as their purpose, the development of collaborative mutual relationships between those involved in the evaluation process (e.g. Bates, 1988; Smyth, 1988). A critical approach to evaluation provides the opportunity for those involved in the evaluation process (whether they be teachers, teachers and students, or parents, teachers and students) to own and negotiate, collaboratively, the meanings and understandings of their own teaching and learning. It also challenges them to be critical of their own work in mutually supportive and cooperative ways in an attempt to understand the wider historical, social and cultural forces which inform and influence the work, and in which the work is embedded.

A critical evaluation is not only concerned with issues of economy and efficiency, which are the concerns of technical outcomes-based evaluation, but with concerns of ethics and justice and who benefits from the present educational structures and practices. It is also concerned with changing these structures and practices to create a more just and equitable society. Such an approach to evaluation can be applied in the classroom or the whole school. It can be utilized with students, with teachers, with school executives and with parents.

To develop and implement critical forms of assessment and evaluation will mean fundamental changes in the traditional ways of thinking about, and organizing, schools and other educational organizations. It is these strategies for educational change which are the focus for Chapter 11.

Related Tasks

1. With someone else, collect some test papers or examination papers from a school or an education system which deal with a course in which you are teaching or preparing to teach:
    - Analyze the degree to which you think the papers are likely to generate reliable and valid information. Provide reasons for your judgements.
2. Develop a short test for a class you are teaching. There should be about ten or twelve questions:
    - The test should be based on multiple choice or short answer/fill-in the-blanks type items. Some items should allow all students to be correct, others should be aimed at only the few very able students;
    - Give the test to the class and mark the responses;
    - Analyze the responses. Determine whether the item(s) which was designed to be answered correctly by all students was in fact answered so. See if only the more

able students answered correctly the item that was designed for them. Are there any items that were not 'good items' (i.e. they did not achieve the purpose for which they were designed)? Maybe they might have been unclear to the students. Maybe they did not discriminate between able and less able students. Analyze these items. How would you improve them? Discuss your ideas with your colleagues.

3. Identify a task that you have given to a group of students. The task might be written, it might be oral, it might be in the form of an object:
   - With a group of colleagues, develop a set of criteria that you think are appropriate to assess the task;
   - Have each individual assess the responses to the task using the criteria determined. Keep a record of each person's assessment;
   - After each response has been assessed by each person, compare the results. What did you find? Discuss the findings. Try to account for them, in terms of the task, the criteria and the assessment process. What do you learn about assessment from this experience?
4. With a group of students, negotiate a goal-based approach to the assessment of a unit of work:
   - Implement the approach. What issues, advantages, problems did you discover? Talk about these with the students and with your colleagues.

Reading 3E

Brookfield S. (1986) *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A comprehensive analysis of principles and effective practices*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 283–297.

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12

Facilitating Learning

Toward Guidelines for Good Practice

Specifying Criteria

As a conclusion to this book, I want to present an evaluative rationale that readers can adopt, perhaps partially, perhaps wholly, to guide their evaluations. The rationale is derived from my philosophy of adult education, and it is a brief elaboration of this philosophy that ends my book. The critical evaluative rationale, therefore, is based on the extent to which certain philosophical dimensions are evident in the facilitation of adult learning. Briefly stated, this critical philosophy regards the facilitation of learning as a value-laden activity in which curricular and programmatic choices reflect normative preferences. It sees adult education as a socialization agent of some force, capable of confirming values and behaviors uncritically assimilated in earlier periods or of prompting adults to challenge the validity of their received ideas and codes.

Developing in adults a sense of their personal power and self-worth is seen as a fundamental purpose of all education and training efforts. Only if such a sense of individual empowerment is realized will adults possess the emotional strength to challenge behaviors, values, and beliefs accepted uncritically by a majority. Both causally antecedent to, and concurrent with,

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this developing sense of self-worth in the individual comes an awareness of the contextuality of knowledge and beliefs. The task of the educator, then, becomes that of encouraging adults to perceive the relative, contextual nature of previously unquestioned givens. Additionally, the educator should assist the adult to reflect on the manner in which values, beliefs, and behaviors previously deemed unchallengeable can be critically analyzed. Through presenting alternative ways of interpreting and creating the world to adults, the educator fosters a willingness to consider alternative ways of living.

These criteria are offered for consideration by educators as fundamental indicators by which they may judge the worth of a formal or informal effort to facilitate learning. In real life, of course, all adults will not develop a sense of self-worth, an awareness of the contextuality of knowledge, a willingness to speculate on alternatives, and a capacity to re-create their personal and social worlds, according to the neatly sequenced stages described in the previous paragraph. Some adults will come to appreciate the contextuality of knowledge or learn to speculate on alternatives, without having the sense of self-worth and personal power needed to realize those alternatives. Others will have the internal strength to alter certain peripheral features of their lives (their attitudes to other cultures, their susceptibility to advertisements, and so forth) but will be unable to change the patterns that govern their significant personal relationships. Still others may consider social alternatives and even imagine new political forms, but lack the techniques, skills, or collective support needed to effect change. This does not mean, however, that we should abandon attempts to specify as clearly as possible the criteria we are adopting to determine the success of our efforts.

Such criteria will, inevitably, take the form of abstractions. They will be oversimplifications of reality. The real world of social encounters is sufficiently chaotic to make the detection of whether or not these criteria have been satisfied a correspondingly haphazard and often messy enterprise. Nevertheless, if we make no attempt to specify criteria, we will be unable to assign value and worthwhileness to different activities. All educational encounters will then exist in some kind of moral vacuum, and we will be unable to judge whether a lecture in which a religious or political dogma is fervently and uncritically expounded is more or less educational than a discussion of the ethical assumptions underlying communism and capitalism.

If we are to wear the mantle of "educator," we must, at some minimum level, make explicit the criteria by which we determine the educational worth of our efforts. Not to do so is unthinking or dishonest, and it is to consign ourselves to being adaptive and reactive satisfiers of whatever consumer learning needs happen to capture our attention. But it is to the means for determining whether or not these criteria are actually being met in an educational activity that we must now turn our attention.

The preceding chapters have been concerned chiefly with matters of practice—facilitating adult learning through self-directed modes, using andragogical methods, teaching adults through discussion groups, developing programs for adult learners, and evaluating effective practice. Implicit in these discussions of practice, however, has been a concept of facilitation somewhat different from that held by many practitioners. In this final chapter it is important that the philosophical assumptions on which this concept is based be stated clearly. As has been repeatedly argued, practical expertise that exists in a moral vacuum can be a dangerous thing. Practitioners can become technically proficient but find that without a firm philosophical rationale to guide the application of their skills, they are devoting their efforts to programs and purposes that are morally dubious.

The concept of facilitation informing this book was discussed initially in Chapter One in terms of the six characteristics of effective facilitation. Contained in these characteristics are features that will be familiar to those who know the literature of humanistic psychology and psychotherapy—a respect for participants in the teaching-learning transaction, a commitment to collaborative modes of program development, and an acknowledgment of the educational value of life experiences. Also contained in this concept of facilitation, however, is an element of critical analysis that may not be quite so familiar.

Stated briefly, this analytic component requires that facilitators and practitioners prompt learners to consider alternative perspectives on their personal, political, work, and social lives. Hence, effective facilitation means that learners will be challenged to examine their previously held values, beliefs, and behaviors and will be confronted with ones that they may not want to consider. Such challenges and confrontations need not be done in an adversarial, combative, or threatening manner; indeed, the most effective facilitator is one who can encourage adults to consider rationally and carefully perspectives and interpretations of the world that diverge from those they already hold, without making these adults feel they are being cajoled or threatened. This experience may produce anxiety, but such anxiety should be accepted as a normal component of learning and not as something to be avoided at all costs for fear that learners will leave the group. There are forms of fulfillment that are quite unlike those produced by a wholly joyful encounter with a new form of knowledge or a new skill area. It is this dimension of increased insight through critical reflection on current assumptions and past beliefs and behaviors that is sometimes ignored in treatments of adult learning. One purpose of this book is to place the prompting of this form of learning at the heart of what it means to be a good facilitator.

It is important to state, however, that because teaching-learning transactions are collaborative, the prompting of critical reflection may not always be done by the participant designated as the facilitator. In the most effective learning groups, facilitating behaviors are assumed by various members of these groups at different times. One feature of the leaderless groups discussed in Chapter Six—women's consciousness-raising groups, quality circles, political advocacy groups, and so on—is that the member who is responsible for the initial formation of these groups does not have to assume full responsibility for facilitating learning. As a group culture develops, various members will challenge others to examine their current ways of thinking and living, and this activity will be seen as wholly appropriate. As a recent study of self-concept change among black women students at college points out (Meyer, 1985), one of the valued characteristics of good facilitators as identified by these women is a readiness to challenge learners.

Building a Critical Philosophy of Practice

The public articulation of a philosophy of effective practice is an activity viewed with apparent indifference or distaste by many educators and trainers of adults. Such educators might appear to an outsider to be bereft of any rationale for their practice. This is rarely the case. In reality, most practitioners accept employing agency mission statements as general definitions of purpose or declare good practice to be the satisfaction of felt and expressed needs. These positions in themselves exemplify a philosophical rationale—that of pragmatism.

Acceptance of this pragmatic rationale is perhaps most evident in the tendency to equate the design of effective program-planning models with the sum total of effective practice. According to this argument, the education of adults is a matter of designing, conducting, and evaluating educational experiences so as to meet the felt needs of adults. Hence, practitioner effectiveness becomes defined in terms of processes and activities—the ability to design, conduct, and evaluate programs for learners—rather than in terms of fundamental purposes or curriculum. But if we view effective practice solely as the improvement of ever more refined practice skills and regard facilitator roles and responsibilities as being primarily those of technicians of design, we denude practice of any philosophical rationale, future orientation, or purposeful mission. There exists no philosophical yardstick in terms of criteria of success, notions of purpose, or appropriate curricula against which the effectiveness of such facilitation can be judged. Furthermore, if we accept the view that we should serve only felt needs, then our priorities, purposes, and primary functions will be wholly determined by others. Our curriculum will be devised in response to demands made by those who can best attract our attention and are most articulate in presenting their case.

To counter this danger that facilitation will become solely a responsive, reactive activity, it is important that practitioners develop a philosophical rationale, or what Apps (1982) calls a belief system, to grant their practice order and purpose. They need to identify those characteristics by which the fundamental worth of any attempt to facilitate adult learning can be judged.

This does not mean that such a philosophy must be exemplified to its fullest degree in every educational encounter with adults. Such an insistence would be so intimidating to practitioners as to prevent *any* attempt to implement a philosophy. We should regard this rationale rather as a variable that can be realized to a greater or lesser extent at different times, in different settings, with different groups. Even within one class session the extent to which this philosophy is realized will vary with the nature of the individuals concerned, the exercises pursued, and the educator's conduct. Nonetheless, it is vital that a clear rationale be articulated so that practitioners may have a benchmark for judging the extent to which their activities exemplify fundamental purposes, principles, and practice. Without a coherent rationale (even if full implementation is not always possible), practice will be condemned to an adaptive, reactive mode. Practitioner activities will be determined by current curricular trends (whether these be for aerobics, computer literacy, or peace education) or by the ability of certain individuals and groups to make themselves heard and their demands felt.

Several writers have indeed warned of the dangers of succumbing to a reactive and pragmatic rationale. Lawson (1979) and Monette (1979) have both condemned the insidious influence of the service rationale on programs for adult learners. According to this rationale, practitioners are technicians whose function is to cater to the expressed needs of their clients in as effective a manner as possible. These writers point out that by responding to felt needs, the educator does not have to make value judgments concerning the relative merits of different curricular offerings. Only rarely is there any acknowledgment in the literature of the moral and professional requirement that the educator act in accordance with value choices.

Crabtree (1963) has also condemned the manner in which the idea of "customer service" comes to determine the form of the curriculum for adult learners. Similarly, Powell (1964) warned against the importing of a business rationale into adult education and expressed his concern at the growing tendency to let a preoccupation with needs assessments and marketing procedures replace the setting of fundamental goals for a program. Seduction of the programmer by evidence of a strong and immediate demand for a certain course offering was also recognized by Herring (1953), who blamed the galloping mediocrity he saw in many programs for adult learners on the institutionally prescribed need to increase enrollments. Herring lamented the tendency of program planners to avoid social and political issues that they thought were too serious or too contentious to draw large numbers of participants.

In adult education, however, we seem currently to be in danger of becoming preoccupied with refining techniques to the exclusion of any consideration of the rationale underlying those techniques. We are philosophically numb, concerned with the design of ever more sophisticated needs assessment techniques, program planning models, and evaluative procedures. It seems not to have occurred to us that the perfection of technique can only be meaningful when placed within a context of some fundamental human or social purpose. Technique is, after all, only a means to broader ends. When technique is worshipped to the exclusion of the human or social purposes it is meant to serve, then it is easy for us to become dazzled by the convolutions of the latest shaman of procedure and by the pronouncements of those who flaunt commonsense ideas regarding teaching and learning under the guise of presenting a revolutionary paradigm of practice.

In contrast, this chapter attempts to comment on the fundamental nature and proper purpose of facilitating learning by outlining a philosophy of practice that comprises three fundamental elements. First, there should be offered a clear definition of the activity concerned. Second, from this definition there should be derived a number of general purposes for the field. Finally, on the basis of this definition and this general statement of purpose there should be formulated a set of criteria by which the success of various practitioner efforts can be judged. Such criteria would allow us to reflect on our own practice and to examine the activities of others in terms of their effectiveness.

This definition, statement of purposes, and explication of criteria should be firmly and avowedly prescriptive. A philosophy of practice should, at the most fundamental level, be concerned with the resolution of second-order questions, that is, questions that cannot be answered by recourse to the empirical world. In other words, we cannot conduct a survey to determine in some objectively empirical sense what should be the purpose of our efforts. We can conduct assessments of present levels of competence and declare certain populations to be in states of educational need with regard to some previously defined standard. Such assessments are only objective, however, to the extent that they are based on a normatively defined standard of competence. Similarly, by conducting a Delphi survey of adult education professors, we can determine their views on the proper purposes of facilitation. This survey will not answer for us, however, the fundamental question concerning what should be the purpose of educating adults, for this is a question that is explored in a quite separate area of intellectual discourse. The domain of discourse surrounding such a question is one of prescriptive preferences, moral commitments, and categorical imperatives. We will come to construct our philosophy of practice on the basis of the personal and social imperatives we feel to be most potent. In the course of this construction we will admittedly be cognizant of the opinions of those intellectual leaders we respect. Such opinions cannot grant to our philosophy its internal power and commitment, however, since this will be derived from our experience of the world and from our personal belief system concerning the most desirable and meaningful aspects of this experience.

Implementing the Rationale

A philosophy of practice should allow considerable scope for operationalization. In an activity such as facilitating learning, statements of fundamental purpose are of limited value if they cannot be realized in terms of practice. Concomitant with this outline of a philosophical rationale, therefore, should be some guidance in regard to teaching method, curriculum development, program planning, and evaluation. But such techniques will not exist in their own right; they will be grounded in, and derived from, a carefully explicated rationale. This rationale—from which are derived various practical injunctions in terms of planning, teaching, curriculum development, and evaluation—will serve as a yardstick against which the effectiveness and worth of a particular effort can be judged. This philosophy and its concomitant operationalizations should serve as a benchmark and as a guide by which practice can be mapped.

The philosophy of practice proposed within this last chapter centers on the notion of the adult's developing sense of control and autonomy. Such autonomy is not to be equated with atomistic isolation; rather, it is realized in personal relationships, in sociopolitical behavior, and in intellectual judgment. The purpose of facilitation is to assist individuals to begin to exercise control over their own lives, their interpersonal relationships, and the social forms and structures within which they live. This is not to say that facilitation will enable adults to exert complete control over all aspects of their worlds. However, it is possible to envisage existences that are more or less meaningful and authentic to the individuals involved, according to the degree to which they feel they have some proactive role in creating their worlds.

It is proposed that all involved in teaching-learning transactions assist each other to identify the external sources and internalized assumptions framing their conduct and to be ready to assess these critically. Such critical awareness will involve an appreciation of the contextual, provisional, and relative nature of truth, public knowledge, and personal beliefs. When a disjunction becomes evident between adults' individual aspirations and the socially received codes, value frameworks, and belief systems informing their behavior, then autonomy is reflected in a jettisoning of received assumptions. Occurring along with this abandonment of assumptions perceived as irrelevant and inauthentic will be the transformation of individual and collective circumstances. Such a transformation will be manifest in renegotiations of personal relationships, attempts to re-create the conditions of work so as to imbue these with some sense of personal significance, and attempts to alter social forms.

All human interactions alter the consciousness of those involved to a greater or lesser extent. Teaching-learning transactions are no exceptions to this rule; indeed they possess an unusual degree of potency in that the facilitator's statements and comments are typically granted a high degree of credibility and significance by learners. Learners grant authority to interpretations, generalizations, and statements of preference made by the facilitator, even though he or she may avow this equality of status with learners and emphasize that they are partners in a collaborative endeavor. Facilitators may profoundly dislike this role, particularly those of a democratic, egalitarian temper. To be the beneficiary of imputations of moral as well as intellectual superiority by learners is confining and often even embarrassing. However, inasmuch as most adults received an initial education that encouraged them to see teachers as authority figures, it is hardly surprising if they prove incapable, at least at first, of viewing the facilitator as a partner and intellectual collaborator.

This ascribed authority places facilitators in an uncomfortable position, particularly if they subscribe to andragogical principles. It also makes the adoption of an ethical code of practice—a requirement of first importance in any profession—doubly necessary. Any position of authority, whether ascribed or prescribed, carries within it the possibility of abuse. This potential will be reduced if facilitators seek, as rigorously as possible, to submit all assertions (including their own) to critical scrutiny. Facilitators will cite appropriate evidence for any generalizations they make and will treat all theories, explanatory systems, standards of esthetic discrimination, conceptual constructs, and criteria of excellence as provisional and relative.

Aside from viewing theoretical systems or explanations as provisional, the facilitator should also present alternative interpretations and possibilities to students. Such alternatives may be esthetic, cognitive, or sociopolitical. Hence, a course on craft skills should encourage inquiries into the origins of standards of excellence and not concentrate only on the development of psychomotor skills exemplifying those standards. A similar requirement also holds for courses dealing with bodies of cognitive knowledge. These should submit central concepts and theoretical frameworks to critical review. Criteria of intellectual excellence should be viewed as humanly contrived, not divinely ordained, and all statements and assertions should be regarded as provisional. With regard to those courses dealing with behavioral phenomena—for example, role training, interpersonal skill development, or counseling techniques—the twin canons of relativity and provisionality also pertain.

In fields such as health education, administrative studies, or personnel management, training courses can only qualify as examples of effective facilitation if the behavioral paradigms presented in them are subjected to critical scrutiny. Moreover, if such courses are to be seen as involving education and not simply training, they must incorporate a willingness to consider alternatives to the popularly prevailing norms governing correct professional behaviors. Participants in such courses would learn to be skeptical of definitive sets of principles of practice and to view conventionally accepted wisdom or apparently exemplary behaviors as relative and provisional.

The chief argument proposed here is that effective facilitation is present when adults come to appreciate the relative, provisional, and contextual nature of public and private knowledge and when they come to understand that the belief systems, value frameworks, and moral codes informing their conduct are culturally constructed. It is also evident when adults are enabled to create meaning in their personal worlds through a continual redefinition of their relationships with others. Following on from this exhibition of personal autonomy and the realization that individual circumstances can be consciously altered comes the insight that it is possible, in concert with others, to change cultural forms, including attitudinal sets, role expectations, conventions, and folkways, as well as social structures.

This concept of facilitation is obviously prescriptive; that is to say, the outcomes identified in the preceding paragraph are given in the form of stipulative preference statements. This is not to imply that adults can become adept at critical reflectivity in some final, static manner. Rather, it is to say that adults should be encouraged to engage in the continuous critical analysis of received assumptions, commonsense knowledge, and conventional behaviors. The state of adulthood can never be fully realized, and it is not a question of an adult's acquiring a set of fixed competencies. Adult education as a transactional encounter is essentially a process. Central to this process is a continual scrutiny by all involved of the conditions that have shaped their private and public worlds, combined with a continuing attempt to reconstruct those worlds. This praxis of continual reflection and action might be accurately viewed as a process of lifelong learning.

It is important to realize that philosophical prescriptions painstakingly derived from impeccably developed rationales are going to be contradicted daily in the real world of practice. Teaching-learning transactions are, after all, dynamic interactions—psychosocial dramas in which unforeseen eventualities, serendipitous circumstances, and individual idiosyncrasies constantly distort our neatly planned visions of how our learning groups should function. Educators employed within formal educational institutions daily contradict their own prescriptions concerning how best to foster learners' freedom and individuality.

An example drawn from my own practice may illustrate what I mean. In a course I teach on the philosophy and theory of adult education, I generally invite group members to identify within this same course any elements of "banking education" (Freire, 1970b) practices that they may perceive. ("Banking education" refers to the system whereby knowledge is seen as deposited by experts in the vaults that are learners unformed minds. The educator retains total control over the goals, content, and evaluative criteria of the educational activity.) Very often, as the learning group reviews the curriculum, format of meetings, and evaluative procedures of the last few weeks or months, it becomes evident that a familiar dynamic has operated, despite all our best intentions to the contrary. According to this dynamic, I have begun by emphasizing the collaborative nature of the course and then, with the apparently unwitting connivance of course members, have proceeded to assume major responsibility for the most important decisions concerning course content and format. Although all members of the group

(myself included) pay frequent testimony to the need to draw on individual participants' own experiences, to ground curricula in their concerns, and to evolve a collaborative format, we fall easily and unthinkingly into a pattern of interaction whereby I begin to expound on adult education from an expert standpoint and they passively receive my distilled wisdom. Participants and I have been socialized to such an extent into a banking education mode that we fall easily into our respective roles of authority figure and inexperienced learners, no matter what our resolutions to the contrary. Educators of adults, as much as learners, uncritically assimilate various assumptions, norms, beliefs, and values, and it is a genuinely humbling experience to ask participants in a learning group to point out the disguised authoritarianism in one's own practice.

What must never be lost sight of, however, is the need to develop a clear rationale for practice, even though that rationale may be contradicted or only partially realized in the day-to-day practitioner reality of facilitating learning. Without such a rationale we are little more than reactive automatons—ciphers through whom are channeled the latest curricular or methodological fads, irrespective of any consideration of their innate validity. While a healthy skepticism regarding the possibility of continually exemplifying such a philosophy of practice is essential to the sanity of facilitators, the necessity to develop such a philosophy should be regarded as fundamental to good practice.

Educators of adults have grown accustomed to living with organizational and professional contradictions. They probably became facilitators because they saw that as a way of increasing individuals' fulfillment, happiness, and sense of control, yet organizational criteria for their success are frequently antithetical to these motivations. In colleges and universities, for example, educators are encouraged to develop curricula and to arrange classrooms so as to attract the largest possible number of learners. The reason for this is not only to add to the sum total of human happiness and enlightenment, but also to make money. Educational institutions, particularly in an era dominated by supply-side economics, are viewed by politicians, trustees, administrators, and sometimes even faculty partly as educational enterprises partly as business operations. Hence, the greater the numbers of students that can be attracted, the greater the revenues for the educational institution. In business and industrial settings, these economic criteria are applied quite openly to determining the success of training initiatives. While trainers may hope that workshops and seminars will enable adults to make sense of themselves and their worlds, their success as trainers will be judged by whether or not productivity rises as a consequence of attendance at the training sessions.

Furthermore, most educators and trainers of adults subscribe to a professional code that acknowledges the value of democratic collaboration and the inequity of forcing students to learn. Yet in their daily practice they repeatedly encounter a set of contextual constraints that force them into precisely the behaviors that they criticize in philosophical terms. Institutional timetables, economic necessities, standardized curricula, and unofficial norms of "what works in the *real* world" all conspire to nudge the educator into more didactic, authoritarian attitudes and behaviors than he or she might wish. The conspiracy of contextual constraints becomes all the more compelling when learners repeatedly declare that they wish for more direction from facilitators or that they want facilitators to "put more of themselves" into the learning encounter. Learners, as much as facilitators, have been socialized into a view of education as an authoritarian-based transmission of information, skills, and attitudinal sets from teacher to taught. Under these circumstances, it will often be hard for educators to stand firm against the temptation to take more control over the learning encounter. Yet to give in to this temptation is to reaffirm precisely those patterns of dependency that prevent adults from becoming empowered, self-directed learners.

Given the force of these organizational constraints and professional expectations, it is not surprising that facilitators revert, with only an occasional twinge of conscience, to patterns of behavior they observed in their own teachers. How, then, can they break these patterns and begin to assume the kinds of facilitation roles outlined in this book? My answer is, only by developing a thoughtful rationale to guide their practice. Possessed of such a rationale, facilitators are more likely to stand firm against organizational and professional imperatives that exert pressure on them to dominate learners under the guise of "providing structure" or "clarifying ambiguities." Without such a rationale it is likely that most facilitators will sooner or later fall unthinkingly into patterns of facilitation that support structures of organizational convenience and confirm learners' patterns of dependency learned in the school classroom but have little to do with assisting adults to create, and re-create, their personal, occupational, and political worlds.

Reading 3F

Thompson M. (1991) *Competency Based Training: Some developmental and assessment issues for policy makers.* Department of Technical and Further Education, Adelaide, pp. 33–35.

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Evaluation and Accountability

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Evaluation seems to have been an in-word for such along time now that we might expect people in education, at least, to have a fairly clear idea of what it means. In Workplace Education, we pride ourselves on our willingness to involve all our stakeholders in our determination of outcomes, and we look for performance indicators that will have significance for employers and worker representatives as well as for our own managers and funding bodies—the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), TAFE and so on. That, at least, is the theory.

In this discussion of the current situation I will be drawing on research I undertook with Sharon Coates of the Victorian Division of Further Education as part of an International Literacy Year Evaluation Project. Included among the sources of data were 259 interviews from all states. These interviews were designed to collect information about the goals and objectives of literacy programs, the kinds of performance indicators currently being used, and those indicators which the interviewees believed should be used, and the kinds of measurement instruments which either were used or could be used in the various programs. The interviews covered all the key stakeholders: providers (government and private); students; industry and business; unions; peak bodies (such as Industry Training Advisory Bodies, employer groups, the Public Service Board); relevant government departments, and a few other stakeholders such as correctional services, disabled persons' associations and so on.

Essentially, we were trying to find out what the key players thought about evaluation whether or not their views were consistent, whether they were aware what it really meant, and so on. For the purpose of this paper, I will concentrate on four of these stakeholders groups—workplace education providers, industry and business, unions, and management systems (especially government agencies). As always, what emerged from these interviews may be skewed somewhat by the design of the interview questionnaire. The initial focus was on objectives, not evaluation as such, but the results are nevertheless revealing.

Of course, there were as many ways of expressing the objectives as there were interviews but, broadly summarised, these four groups saw the objectives of programs in the following way.

Workplace Providers

- To improve the ability of workers with literacy problems to cope with current job demands.
- To improve employment opportunities for workers with low literacy skills.
- To improve the quality of worklife for workers with low literacy skills.
- To improve their own effectiveness as providers.
- To improve their own efficiency.
- To improve the participation of targeted groups (ie the social justice aspect).

Industry and Business

- To enable workers to cope with current job demands.
- To enable workers to cope with workplace change.
- To improve access and ability to cope with workplace training.
- To improve the quality of worklife for individual workers—hence for the whole organisation.

Unions

- To develop general skills in literacy/numeracy.

- To improve job-specific skills.
- To improve access to training.
- To improve access to job opportunities and career paths.
- To improve work communication and participation.
- Individual growth and personal goals.

Management Systems/Government Agencies

- Access to further study.
- Access to employment.
- Enhancing the individual's life goals (including skills for the workplace).
- Enhancing opportunities for the individual.
- As negotiated with the learner.

At first glance, this looks very encouraging. The four stakeholder groups seem to have remarkably similar views. It looks as if we are all on the same track when it comes to program objectives—and, consequently, if we get around to it, evaluation. Look a little closer at the focus of those goals and objectives, however, and you see that they are almost all about learners'/ students' progress. There seems to be very little awareness that anyone other than students should be improving their skills, learning or gaining.

This would suggest that we haven't progressed much beyond the early research and thinking which launched the whole workplace literacy movement (ie the recent movement as opposed to older English in the Workplace Program of the AMEP). Reports like *The Skills Employers Want*, *The Bottom Line—Workplace Basic Skills*, *Literacy and Productivity*—these all placed the emphasis on the workers and their lack of basic skills as a major problem (if not *the* major problem) for industry in Australia, Britain and America. This is a focus which has also carried over into the Finn Review and the Carmichael Report. The emphasis is essentially on the need to do something about a deficit in workers' skills.

Even the unions have supported this line. They see it as the way to improve job security for their members, and there is surely nothing wrong with that. Nor can we really argue with the proposition that, for Workplace Education, the bottom line is, in fact, an improvement in the learners' skills. If there is no improvement, then there is really no point to our programs. What we should be concerned about, however, is the concentration of attention on the individual learners and their skills to the exclusion of all other factors.

The problem for us as program providers is that this is too narrow a focus for evaluation. If the success of programs is seen purely in terms of measurable improvement in the students' level of language, literacy or numeracy, then we have missed the point about evaluation—we have fallen into the old trap of confusing evaluation and assessment.

As *The Workforce Training Package* recognises, this as a fundamental distinction.

Assessment is the process of judging the competency levels of individuals. In an educational situation, it is used to determine the entry level and/or progress of individual course participants. Assessment information may feed into evaluation but it is not the same thing.

Evaluation is the process of reviewing courses, programs and/or systems. It is concerned with the extent to which the objectives of those courses, programs and systems are being met (ie. how effective they are), and whether or not resources are being used efficiently. It focuses on inputs and, increasingly, on outcomes.

I referred earlier to my concern that the design of the interview questionnaires may have skewed the results. But when I looked at the kinds of performance indicators that were being used or proposed for workplace programs, I found the same kind of concentration on learners. Improved productivity, less time wasted, less product wastage, greater participation in training/ work groups etc.—these all follow because workers gain new skills. But we must ask, is this all there is to it?

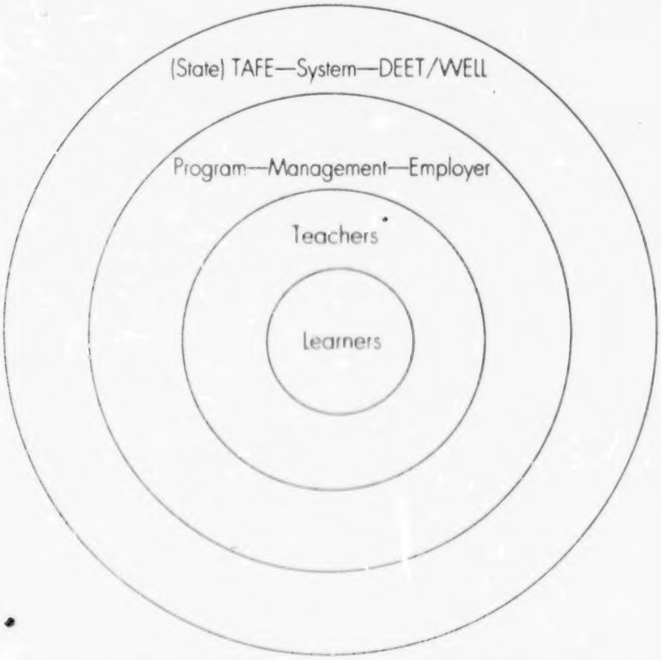
What about the supervisors' skills in communication, the managers' ability to communicate with their diverse workforce, the overall level of management skills, the ability or the willingness of the whole workplace at all levels to change its culture (ie. its attitudes, values and beliefs)? What about the effects of the economic downturn on the motivation of course participants? What about the signals coming from the management of an enterprise which does not provide a decent learning environment, or which constantly shifts or changes literacy class times or venues to make way for other, *more important* activities (including other training).

What about the effects of our own management systems on program continuity and quality, of our own arrangements (or dis-arrangements) in staffing—such things as the emphasis on short, isolated courses with no links to a long view of education and training, either for the individual or the industry? What about our publicity? What about the uncertainty and delays in program planning? What about the disincentives to develop the skills of our own teachers arising from our current system of funding by tender?

In my earlier thinking and writing about evaluation, I emphasised the need to see evaluation as an on-going process, taking part at all stages in the program. I stressed the need to plan for evaluation right from the beginning, not to have it relegated to the end of a program as an afterthought, something you might do if you had a bit of time left over. I do not wish to imply that this is no longer as important as it was.

What must be added to this view of evaluation, however, is an awareness that while evaluation must take place at all stages of a program, it must also take account of all levels of responsibility. We must start asking what all the players at all the levels are doing to make our programs a success—or, conversely, what they are not yet doing but should be doing, or what they should be doing better? Or, on a more positive note, what is being done well at all levels, and what should be strengthened and encouraged?

The diagram (below) is a simplified version of Sharon Coates' evaluation model, but it represents this concept quite clearly.



For workplace education, as for any other education program, this raises some very important issues.

- How do we bring the outer rings into play in the evaluation picture?
- How do we shift the emphasis off the learner and on to the other parties who are also involved in improving the quality of our outcomes?
- How can we ensure that the responsibility for achieving success in our programs is properly shared among all the agencies involved and that it doesn't weigh unevenly and unfairly on the learners and, by association, the teachers?

Reading 3G

Berk R. & Rossi P. (1990) *Thinking about Program Evaluation*. Sage Publications, California, pp. 12–32.

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2

Key Concepts in Evaluation Research

We turn initially to a number of central concepts in evaluation research. Because the main intellectual roots of evaluation research are found in the social sciences, social science concepts and research methods predominate. All social science fields have contributed to the development of evaluation research methods. It is not surprising, therefore, that the best evaluation research and the best evaluators draw on a number of disciplines, using an eclectic repertoire of concepts and methods.

As we proceed, below, we will begin with the policy environment in which evaluation research is undertaken, because policy questions provide motivation for the entire evaluation research enterprise. Then, we move on to technical matters. However, the boundaries between policy concerns and technical concerns are often unclear, in part because both have implications for one another. From the start, we stress that evaluation research is not a laboratory science.

Policy Space

The substantive roots of evaluation research rest in policy concerns, and evaluations are almost entirely confined to issues that are contained in the current "policy space." That is, evaluations are almost exclusively concerned with making judgments about policies and programs that are on the current agenda of policymakers (broadly construed to include a wide variety of "players," not just public officials). Clearly, the policy space is time and space bound and does not encompass a permanently fixed set of policies and programs; it changes over time and it varies over political jurisdictions. For example, in the 1960s, the national policy space in the United States included direct income support, in the form of a "negative income tax," for households falling below the poverty line. In response, a number of evaluation projects explored what the impact of such support might be. In the 1980s, the national policy space no longer includes a negative income tax. Likewise, in the middle 1970s communities across the State of California were considering a wide variety of water conservation programs because of a serious drought. By the early 1980s, other problems dominated the local policy space, in part because the drought had passed.

It is the almost exclusive attention to matters in current policy space that distinguishes evaluation research from academic social science, and a good evaluation researcher knows how to determine what is in the policy space and what is not. For example, an academic social scientist might study the "urban underclass" as an intellectual matter and may in addition be genuinely concerned about their plight. In contrast, the evaluation researcher would focus on the current policy debates and especially social interventions that are being contemplated or are already in place. Still more concretely, the academic might have a long-standing interest in theories of segmented labor markets and undertake a study of the causes of teenage unemployment to test competing theories. The evaluator could certainly draw on insights from such research but might concentrate, for instance, on the impact of a particular job training program for unemployed teenagers.

Stakeholders

By virtue of its engagement in policy space matters, evaluation research is saturated with political concerns. The outcome of an evaluation can be expected to attract the attention of persons, groups, and agencies who hold stakes in the outcome. These "stakeholders" include policymakers on the executive and legislative levels; the agencies and their officials who administer the policies or programs under scrutiny; the persons who deliver the services in question; often, groups representing the targets or beneficiaries of the programs, or the targets or beneficiaries themselves; and sometimes taxpayers and citizens generally. In almost all program issues, stakeholders may be aligned on opposing sides, some favoring the program and some opposing. And whatever the outcome of the evaluation may be, there are usually some who are pleased and some who are disappointed: It is usually impossible to please everyone. For example, an evaluation showing the benefits of allowing convicts to be employed by private firms (e.g., to manufacture furniture) might be strongly endorsed by prisoners' rights groups, prison officials, and local chambers of commerce but be roundly criticized by law enforcement groups, law-and-order legislators, and labor unions.

In short, an evaluation report ordinarily is not regarded as a neutral document: Rather, it is scrutinized, often minutely, by stakeholders who are quick to discern how its contents affect their activities. Even when an evaluation is conducted "in house"—by an agency concerned with its own activities—stakeholders may appear within the agency to appraise the report's implications.[1] One implication is that evaluation research should not to be undertaken by persons who prefer to avoid controversy, or who have difficulty facing criticism. Often, moreover, the criticism is "political" and not motivated by scientific concerns. A second implication is that much greater care may need to be taken in the conduct of evaluation research than in the conduct of its academic cousin, basic research. Procedures bordering on the slipshod will surely come to the attention of critical stakeholders and render an evaluation report vulnerable. In addition, even for well-conducted studies, attacks will typically focus on "methodological issues" because, as noted earlier, *all* studies have methodological flaws (more on that shortly). Alleged methodological errors are easy targets.[2] A third implication is that the conduct of evaluation research often involves careful prior negotiations with stakeholders. An evaluation of a within-school educational program will be seriously impeded, for example, if a teachers' organization recommends that its members not cooperate with the evaluator.

Program Effectiveness: Three Meanings

While the importance of the political environment in which evaluation research is undertaken is hard to overemphasize, political matters are hardly the whole story. A mixed bag of legitimate technical skills are the evaluator's ticket of admission and in the end justify his or her keep. We turn, then, to technical matters, beginning with conceptions of the proverbial bottom line: program effectiveness.

In the broadest sense, evaluations are concerned with whether or not programs or policies are achieving their goals and purposes. Discerning the goals of policies and programs is an essential part of an evaluation and almost always its starting point. However, goals and purposes are often stated vaguely, typically in an attempt to garner as much political support as possible. Programs and policies that do not have clear and consistent goals cannot be evaluated for their effectiveness. In response, a subspecialty of evaluation research, evaluability assessment, has developed to uncover the goals and purposes of policies and programs in order to judge whether or not they can be evaluated.

Insofar as goals are articulated, "effectiveness" is the extent to which a policy or program is achieving its goals and purposes. In practice, it cannot be overemphasized that the concept of effectiveness must always address the issue: "compared with what?" For *marginal* effectiveness the issue is dosage; the consequences of more or less of some intervention are assessed. For example, one might study whether decreasing by one-half the ratio of grade school students to their teachers later doubles student

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performance on standardized reading tests. For *relative* effectiveness, the contrast is between a program and the absence of the program or between two or more program options.[3] For example, one might compare the impact on the number of cancer screenings generated by public service announcements versus the number generated by mass mailings of pamphlets, both containing the same educational information. Finally, it is common to consider effectiveness in dollar terms: *cost-effectiveness*. Comparisons are made in units of outcome per dollar. For example, vaccinating the elderly for influenza would probably be less effective in reducing the number of flu-related fatalities for all age groups than vaccinating everyone regardless of age. However, focusing on the elderly may be more cost-effective because, with mass vaccinations, a large number of people would be vaccinated who were not significantly at risk. That is, the cost per life saved would be lower.

Validity

It is one thing to properly conceptualize program effectiveness and quite another to determine empirically whether a program is effective. And determining effectiveness depends, in turn, on the validity of the evaluation. In other words, evaluation research shares with other research activities the overriding goal of achieving high validity. Little is learned from evaluations with low validity.

Broadly stated, validity represents a set of scientific criteria by which the *credibility* of research may be judged. As such, it involves matters of degree; studies are more or less valid. For example, there is currently a heated controversy about the degree to which findings from studies using mice to determine the carcinogenic impact of various environmental pollutants may be properly applied to humans (Freedman and Zeisel 1988). We stress, in addition, that views of evaluators may differ on which kinds of validity are most important (e.g., Cronbach 1982), and what validity means may change over time as methodological technology evolves. Nevertheless, it is common to emphasize four kinds of validity: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and statistical conclusion validity (Cook and Campbell, 1979). We will return to the four kinds of validity after laying a bit more groundwork.

Ideally, policymakers are seeking a binary assessment about a social program: thumbs up or thumbs down. Either the program works or it does not. In addition, they are ideally seeking a specific number indicating how effective the program is. Thus a prison vocational training program might reduce recidivism by 15%. Or a nutrition program for pregnant women in low-income neighborhoods may increase the birth weight of infants by an average 2.3 pounds. Or a company's affirmative action program may increase by 15 the number of Blacks and Latinos hired. As just noted, however, the world of program evaluation is never that simple. *All* assessments come with healthy amounts of uncertainty, and evaluation results necessarily have varying amounts of credibility. To be sure, studies with greater validity provide more credible results, but some uncertainty will always remain. That is, evaluation findings are not right or wrong, but more or less credible. Typically, the uncertainty is expressed in how the role of chance is represented but that is hardly the whole story (see below).

It is perhaps important to stress, as well, that the uncertainty in evaluation results is inherent in the social phenomena being studied and no research methodology, even the ideal, can remove it. However, stronger research methods typically reduce the amount of uncertainty.

Measurement and Construct Validity

Measurement is nothing more than a systematic procedure to assign (real) numbers to objects. "Age," for example, may be measured by the number of years between birth and the present. "Prior record" may be measured by a "1" if there is a previous conviction and a "0" if there is no previous conviction. "Attitudes toward water conservation" may be measured by a "3," "2," or "1" depending, respectively, on whether a person answers "agree," "uncertain," or "disagree" to a survey question on the importance of installing water-saving appliances.

Better measures lead to better evaluations (other things being equal). A "good" measure is, in commonsense terms, one that is likely to measure accurately what it is supposed to measure. For example, a study estimating the impact of the Centers for Disease Control's pamphlet on AIDS, recently mailed to all U.S. households, must use measures that properly capture what CDC intended to affect in the way of behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive change. This would be no small task. Questions about measurement quality would apply not only to program outcomes such as "safe sex," but also to measures of the program itself and to other factors that may be at work. For example, a measure of the intervention may be whether individuals read the pamphlet; a factor affecting safe sex may be regular reading of major newsmagazines. Measurement in evaluation research is sometimes discussed under the rubric of *construct validity* (Cook and Campbell 1979).

At a minimum, evaluation researchers should be aware of the critical distinction between two kinds of measurement error: *systematic* and *random*. When the measurement error is systematic, there will be on the average an overestimate or underestimate of the "true" attribute that is being measured. This is at the heart of the perennial controversy over whether standardized IQ tests really tap "general intelligence" in a culture-free manner. Some argue that Blacks, on the average, score less than Whites because Black intelligence is systematically underestimated by the commonly used tests. When the measurement error is random (or "noise"), the measures, on the average, will equal the true attribute, but will be inaccurate to varying degrees for individual instances. That is, the measured IQ for each person will be a flawed measure of intelligence, but if the IQ test could be given a large number of times to each person (with no learning effects), the average of each person's IQ scores would be equal to each person's true intelligence.

It should be clear that systematic measurement error can seriously distort one's evaluation findings. It is also true, however, that random measurement error can be very damaging. When the random measurement error is in the outcome variable(s) of interest, "noise" can obscure real treatment effects. That is, real results may be overlooked. When the random measurement error is in the treatment (e.g., who got which intervention) or the control variables (i.e., variables whose effects need to be disentangled from the effects of the treatment), estimates of the treatment effect can be systematically too high or too low. That is, estimates of treatment impact will be *biased*. Whether approached as an "errors in variables" problem as in the econometric literature (e.g., Kmenta 1971; 309–22), as a "latent variable" problem as in the psychometric literature (Lord 1980), or as the "underadjustment" problem in the evaluation literature (e.g., Campbell and Erlebacher 1970), random error can lead to decidedly nonrandom distortions in evaluation results. The role of random measurement error is sometimes addressed through the concept of "reliability."

Causality and Internal Validity

Many evaluation questions concern causal relations, such as whether or not a proposed program encouraging people not to use wood-burning stoves on high air pollution days will "cause" reductions in air pollution. The literature on causality and causal inference is large and, currently, fraught with controversy (e.g., Pratt and Schlaifer 1984; Holland 1986; Holland and Rubin 1988; Berk 1988b). Suffice it to say that by a "causal effect" we mean a comparison between the outcome had the intervention been introduced compared to the outcome had the intervention not been introduced. For example, the causal effect of a ban on diesel-powered automobiles might be the amount of nitrogen-based pollutants in the air had diesel automobile engines been banned compared to the amount had the ban not been put in place.

From the definition of a causal effect, it should be apparent that, in practice, causal effects cannot be directly observed. One cannot observe the amount of nitrogen-based pollutants in the air simultaneously with and without the ban on diesel engines in place. Rather, causal effects must be inferred. Thus one might try to estimate the causal effect of the ban by comparing air quality before the ban to air quality after. Or one might try to estimate the causal effect of the ban by comparing air quality in an area with the ban to air quality in an area without the ban. In the first case, however, one must assume that no other changes had occurred that could affect air quality in the interval between the earlier and later observational periods. In the second case, one must assume that the two areas are otherwise effectively identical on all factors that could influence air quality. In short, the need to infer causal effects opens the door to inferential errors.

In practice, therefore, whenever a causal relationship is proposed, alternative explanations must be addressed and, presumably, discarded. If such alternatives are not considered, one may be led to make "spurious" causal inferences; the causal relationship being proposed may not in fact exist. Sometimes this concern with spurious causation is addressed under the heading of *internal validity* (Cook and Campbell 1979). For example, anyone who claims that an educational TV program improved the knowledge of those who viewed it must also consider the alternative explanation that viewers were self-selected persons interested in the topic who would have acquired the same amount of information in some other way were the program not available.

The consideration of alternative causal explanations for the success of programs is an extremely important consideration when plans to collect the data are formulated (Heckman and Robb 1985). In the wood-burning example, an observed change in air pollution after the program went into effect may have been caused by milder weather, improved wood-burning equipment, or a rise in cord wood prices leading people to shift to other fuels. The social intervention could be totally irrelevant.

In addition, programs that deal with humans are all more or less subject to problems of self-selection; often persons who are most likely to be helped, or who are already on the road to recovery, are those most likely to participate in a program.

Thus vocational training offered to unemployed adults is likely to attract those who would be most apt to improve their employment situation in any event. Or, sometimes, program operators "skim off the cream" among target populations for participation in programs, thereby assuring that such programs appear successful. In still other cases, events unconnected with the program produce changes that seem to result from the program being evaluated: An improvement in the speed with which cases are processed by a county's courts may seem to result from the addition of more prosecutors to the local district attorney's office, when actually, the improvement may have been caused by an unconnected change in plea-bargaining practices. In any case, we will have more to say about causal inference later.

Generalizability and External Validity

Whatever the empirical conclusions resulting from evaluation research, it is necessary to consider how broadly one can generalize the findings in question; that is, are the findings relevant to other times, other subjects, similar programs, and other program sites? Sometimes such concerns are raised under the rubric of *external validity* (Cook and Campbell 1979).

It cannot be overemphasized that, if findings cannot be generalized, they are useless. Policymakers need to know how interventions of certain *kinds* work and if those *kinds* of interventions are effective. Knowing how a particular program worked and how effective it was by itself has no value, because that program can never be exactly duplicated. The best that policymakers can do is mount a program that is (more or less) *similar* to the program evaluated.

Consider, for instance, a program to reduce the consumption of electricity during the middle of the day (the "peak load" problem) by raising the price of electricity between 10:00 in the morning and 4:00 in the afternoon. Suppose the evaluation convincingly showed that raising the price by 15% led to a drop of 10% in electricity use during the peak load hours. However, the economic environment in which the intervention was introduced is constantly changing, and this will affect not only the base price of electricity on which the 15% increase may be calculated but the fraction of each consumer's budget that is allocated to the purchase of electricity. For example, if the base price of electricity is low relative to the price of gas, consumers may purchase electric stoves rather than gas stoves and electric dryers rather than gas dryers. New homes may be built with electric heat rather than gas heat. Over the medium term, therefore, the consumption of electricity may *increase*. Moreover, consumer concern about energy shortages will depend on a variety of varying factors, such as the way in which OPEC is depicted in American mass media. In short, it is far from obvious what use policymakers could make of the evaluation unless one grants some license to generalize.

The key, therefore, is being able to make statements about energy conservation programs *like* the one evaluated. If the study is well designed (more on that later) and if good social science theory exists on how consumers respond to price, policymakers may confidently conclude that, *in general*, peak-time price increases will reduce energy use during the middle of the day and that the response of consumers to increases in the price of electricity will be much like the responses estimated. For example, micro-economic theory may confirm that increases in the marginal (per unit) price will reduce consumption almost regardless of circumstances and that the "price elasticity" for particular commodities will be effectively constant across different times, places, and mixes of residential consumers. In other words, while the electricity conservation program evaluated is literally unique, it may well be possible to draw more general conclusions. *External validity*, then, refers to the degree to which these kinds of generalizations are justified.

More broadly, among the standard external validity concerns that can be raised about most evaluations is whether the findings are applicable to *settings* differing from the ones in which the evaluation was undertaken. "Settings" can include a country, state, county, city, neighborhood, school district, business firm, hospital, and so on. For example, "safe houses" for wife battery victims may only be effective in urban areas where the location of the safe house can far more easily be kept secret. Likewise, an affirmative action program that might be effective in virtually all private universities might fail at public universities.

It is also common to wonder whether an evaluation's results would be applicable to *persons* who differ from the study's participants in abilities or in socioeconomic background. For example, *Sesame Street* was found to be effective for preschool children from lower socioeconomic families but more effective for children from middle-class families (Cook et al. 1975). In contrast, arresting men who assault their wives seems to deter many future assaults regardless of the assailant's age, education, or race (Berk and Sherman 1988). The same issues arise, incidentally, for all kinds of experimental units such as households, police departments, and prisons.

There is also the problem of generalizing over *time*. For example, Maynard and Murnane (1979) found that transfer payments provided by the Gary Income Maintenance Experiment apparently increased the reading scores of children from the experimental families. One possible explanation is that, with income subsidies, parents (especially in single-parent families) were able to work less and, therefore, spend more time with their children. Even if this were true, it raises the question of whether similar effects would be found at present, when inflation is taking a smaller bite out of the purchasing power of households.

Finally, there is the difficulty of generalizing over *interventions*, because no two treatments are likely to be identical. Consider, for instance, the content of a literacy program for adults. There are a wide variety of ways literacy may be taught and, within these forms, a wide variety of teaching styles, classroom arrangements, incentive systems, and teaching materials. Even with clear and lengthy guidelines, full standardization is impossible. Thus literacy programs integrated into more general vocational training may well have different results from literacy programs taught on a stand-alone basis: One cannot generalize from one approach to another.

Another way of thinking about generalization is to recognize that programs vary in their "*robustness*"; that is, in their ability to produce the same results with different operators, different clientele, in different settings, and at different historical times. Clearly, a "robust" program is highly desirable. For example, many medical interventions, such as vaccination programs for influenza, are relatively robust because, for purposes of fighting disease, medical treatments can often be effectively standardized and humans tend to respond in a sufficiently homogeneous manner.

It should be clear that external validity is a vital issue in all evaluations, which may be handled well or poorly. Basically, there are three devices that evaluators can employ to improve external validity. First, an *unbiased sample* of a defined population (e.g., via a probability sample) justifies generalization back to that population. Thus findings from a random sample of students from a given high school may be generalized to all students in that school. However, the sampling procedures do *not* by themselves justify generalizations to students in other high schools, even in the same school district.

Second, *replications* of a given evaluation may be used to incrementally define the boundaries within which generalization is possible. By "replications," we mean new studies that are as similar as possible to the original study for which generalization was problematic. Note that it is the study that is being replicated; the original findings may or may not be replicated. For example, an experiment in Minneapolis showing that arresting wife batterers reduced their subsequent violent behavior is currently being replicated in six different cities (Berk and Sherman 1988). The goal, in part, is to determine the range of settings in which arresting wife batterers is truly a deterrent. The "content" of an arrest, for instance, can vary by jurisdiction with arrests in some areas including a day or more in jail (awaiting a bail hearing) and arrests in other areas leading to almost immediate release after booking.

Finally, existing *theory* or *empirical generalizations* may be used for generalizing evaluation findings. For example, microeconomic theory asserts that virtually all consumers will respond to price increases by buying less of the particular commodity. Hence, an evaluation in a single community showing that increasing the price of water leads to reduced residential water use may be widely generalized (Berk et al. 1981). Unfortunately, it is very rare in the social sciences to find theory that both is widely accepted and leads to broad generalizations.

Chance and Construct Validity

The nature of chance in social phenomena has a long and controversial history, but for present purposes, chance plays a role whenever uncertainty exists. Basically, there are three (probably complementary) perspectives. First, uncertainty may result from how the data were collected. Second, uncertainty may derive from our ignorance about particular social phenomena. Third, uncertainty may be an inherent part of all social (and physical) phenomena. Each of these perspectives on the role of chance will be considered below.

Regardless of which of the three perspectives one favors, it is always important that the role of chance be properly taken into account. When formal, quantitative findings are considered, this is sometimes addressed under the heading of *statistical conclusion validity* (Cook and Campbell 1979), and the problem is whether "statistical inference" has been undertaken properly. Thus, just as flipping four heads in a row does not necessarily mean that a coin is biased (because a fair coin will produce four heads in a row once in a while), finding that students exposed to a driver's education course have fewer accidents than those who were not does not necessarily mean that the program was a success. The difference in the number of accidents between students who took a driver's education class and students who did not may have been produced by a chance mechanism analogous to flipping a coin. Unless the role of such chance factors is assessed formally, it is impossible to determine if the program effects are real or illusory.

Similar issues concerning the operation of chance appear in nonquantitative work as well, although formal assessments of the role of chance are difficult to undertake in such studies. Nevertheless, it is important to ask whether the reported findings rest on observed behavioral patterns that occurred with sufficient frequency and stability to warrant the conclusions that they are not "simply" the result of chance. Good ethnographers often address the role of chance by collecting lots of data, which allows an assessment of whether certain observed phenomena occur so often in particular ways that "the luck of the draw" can implicitly be ruled out.

Having provided a brief taste of the issues, we can return to the three perspectives on chance. Consider first how evaluation data may be collected. *Sampling error* occurs whenever one is trying to make statements about some population of interest from observations gathered on a subset of that population. For example, one might be studying a sample of students from among those attending a particular school, a sample of teachers from the population of teachers in a particular school system, or even a sample of schools from a population of schools within a city, county, or state. Yet, although it is typically more economical to work with samples, the process of sampling necessarily introduces the prospect that any conclusions based on the sample may differ from conclusions that might have been reached had the full population been studied instead. Indeed, one can well imagine obtaining different results from different subsets of the population.

Although any subset that is selected from a larger population for study purposes may be called a "sample," some subsets may be worse than having no observations at all. The act of sampling must be accomplished according to rational selection procedures that guard against the introduction of selection bias. A biased sample is one in which the statistics calculated will on the average (over many samples) underestimate or overestimate the properties of the population in question (e.g., mean household income in the United States). An unbiased sample is one which the statistics calculated will on the average *not* underestimate or overestimate the properties of the population in question.

A class of such sampling procedures that yield unbiased samples are called *probability samples* in which every element in a population has a known nonzero chance of being selected (Sudman 1976; Kish 1965). Probability samples are difficult to execute and are often quite expensive, especially when dealing with populations that are difficult to locate. Yet there are such clear advantages to such samples, as opposed to haphazard and potentially biased methods of selecting subjects, that probability samples are almost always to be preferred over less rational methods. (See Sudman 1976 for examples of relatively simple and inexpensive probability sampling designs.)

Fortunately, when samples are drawn with probability procedures, disparities between statistics calculated from a sample and the respective population values can only result from the "luck of the draw," and with the proper use of statistical inference, one can place "confidence intervals" around estimates from probability samples, or ask whether a sample estimate differs in a "statistically significant" manner from an assumed population value. In the case of confidence intervals, one can obtain an assessment of how much "wiggle" there is likely to be in one's sample estimates. In the case of significance tests, one can reach a decision about whether a sample statistic (e.g., a mean SAT score) differs from some assumed value in the population (e.g., 600). For example, if the mean SAT score from a random sample of students differs from some national norm, one can determine if the disparities represent statistically significant differences, that is, differences large enough that they could not have occurred easily by chance alone.

A second kind of chance factor associated with data collection stems from the process by which experimental subjects may be *assigned* to experimental and control groups. For example, it may turn out that the assignment process yields an experimental group that, on the average, contains brighter students than the control group. This may confound any genuine treatment effects with a priori differences between experimentals and controls; here the impact of some positive treatment such as self-paced instruction will be artificially enhanced because the experimentals were already performing better than the controls.

Much as in the case of random sampling, for experiments in which the assignment to treatment group or control group is undertaken with probability procedures, the role of chance can be taken into account. In particular, it is possible to determine the likelihood that outcome differences between experimentals and controls are statistically significant. If the disparities are statistically significant, chance (through the assignment process) is eliminated as an explanation, and the evaluator can then begin making substantive sense of the results. It is also possible to place confidence intervals around estimates of the treatment effect(s) indicating roughly the likely range of the effects, given that any estimate is subject to random variation.

Chance may enter one's data independent of how the data were collected. Rather, it surfaces even if the total population of interest is studied and no assignment process or sampling procedure is undertaken. Under one conception, chance variation results from the impact of a large number of known unmeasured forces, sometimes called *"perturbations"* or *"errors."* For example, a student's performance on a standardized test may be explained in part by his or her cognitive abilities. In addition, the performance may be affected by how much sleep he or she had the night before, anxiety levels, distractions during the test, whether he or she ate a proper breakfast, a recent quarrel with a sibling, and a host of other factors. Only the first may be understood and measured. The aggregate effect of the rest is the impact of chance. In principle, therefore, the world is deterministic; chance is an artifact of our ignorance. In practice, however, given that at least partial ignorance is a fact of life, the social phenomena are treated as if they contain a significant chance component.

Under a second conception, chance may be an *inherent* property of social life (and the physical world more generally). The mechanisms involved are well beyond the scope of this text (see Berk 1988 for an introduction), but the basic idea is that social life may be in part like the break in a game of eight ball. The curvature of the balls means that very small and seemingly insignificant displacements in where two balls make contact lead to large differences in the angles at which the balls separate. That is, very small initial differences produce very large consequences. And just as where the balls will stop after the break has a very large element of uncertainty, so does social life. Note that random measurement error may be conceptualized in this fashion because measuring is itself a social process.

Whichever conception one favors, one proceeds in practice with the assumption that, whatever the program processes at work, also at work will be forces that have some impact on outcomes of interest. Typically, these are viewed as a large number of small, random perturbations that on the average cancel one another. Thinking back to the test-taking example above, each neglected factor (e.g., amount of sleep the night before) introduces small amounts of variation in a child's performance, but the aggregate impact is taken to be zero on the average (i.e., their expected value is zero). Yet, because the aggregate impact is only zero on the average, the performance of particular students on particular days will be altered. Thus there will be chance variation in performance that needs to be taken into account. As before, one can apply tests for statistical significance or confidence intervals. One can still ask, for example, if some observed difference between experimentals and controls is larger than might be expected from these chance factors and/or estimate the "wiggle" in experimental-control disparities.

In case it is not clear, statistical conclusion validity speaks to the quality of inferential methods applied and not to whether some result is statistically significant. Statistical conclusion validity may be high or low independent of judgments about statistical significance. (For a more thorough discussion of these and other issues of statistical inference in evaluation research, and statistical inference more generally, see Berk and Brewer 1978; Barnett 1982; Pollard 1986.[4])

Putting It All Together in a Research Design

To briefly summarize our discussion so far, planning an evaluation requires a number of decisions that will affect the validity of the research. First, choices have to be made about how the observed *units* (e.g., people, neighborhoods, schools) will be selected. Probability sampling is one example. Second, decisions have to be made about how *measurement* will be undertaken. For example, an arrest might be measured by an arrest report filed by a police officer. Third, it is also essential to consider how the treatment may be *delivered*. Random assignment is one instance.[5] Plans for undertaking these three activities—selecting the units, measurement, and delivering the intervention—constitute the *research design* of an evaluation.

While the research design speaks to the validity of the study, there are other planning decisions that affect the *relevance* of the evaluation and whether the research design can be effectively *implemented*. In the case of relevance, the intervention must approximate as closely as possible the options in the policy space. In addition, the outcome measures must reflect an outcome that policymakers care about. If the goal of a program is to reduce crime, for example, reducing arrests may or may not be a reasonable proxy (given that many crimes are not reported and that arrests are made for only a fraction of reported crimes). In the worst of all possible worlds, a demonstrable program effect is dismissed because it is the wrong program and the wrong outcome.

In the case of implementation, the research design must be translated into a set of concrete activities that may be undertaken with the resources, personnel, and time available. This is often difficult. For example, it may be impossible to obtain access to police arrest reports needed to measure criminal activity. Or parents may prohibit their children from participating in an experimental sex education class at school. Or overweight individuals may not adhere to the low-calorie diet that was part of the health experiment for which they initially volunteered. We will have more to say about such practical issues later.

The Best Possible Strategy

In the next chapters, the general issues just raised will be addressed in more depth. Before proceeding, however, it is

important to stress that practical constraints may intervene in the "real world" of evaluation research, even when an ideal marriage is made between the evaluation questions posed and the empirical techniques employed. Problems of cost, timeliness, political feasibility, and other difficulties may prevent the ideal from being realized. This in turn will require the development of a "second best" evaluation package (or even third best), more attuned to what is possible in practice. Yet, practical constraints do not *in any way* justify a dismissal of technical concerns; if anything, technical concerns become even more salient when less desirable evaluation procedures are employed.

Notes

1. Evaluations are also vulnerable because they rarely have the advantage of a thorough review by social scientists who were not connected to the project. Some argue that, in academic work, research results are typically scrutinized by "peer review" before publication. Important problems are often detected, therefore, before the research is made public. Whether this is true, however, is open to dispute. In any case, in part because of time constraints, evaluations are usually made public without the equivalent of a peer review.

2. Another strategic advantage of attacking a study's methods is that one can capitalize on popular but naive notions of science. It is common for science to be viewed as a fully objective activity that proceeds by certain hard-and-fast rules. If the rules are not followed, the activity is not science. In fact, scientific activities are some complex combination of rules, guidelines, intuition, habit, and social pressure. However, if it can be shown that an evaluation failed to follow some rule (e.g., the subjects were not a representative sample from some designated population), its credibility among many policymakers can be seriously jeopardized.

3. While "nothing" may be one of the options (serving as a comparison group), it cannot be overemphasized that nothing is not nothing (pardon our Zen). At the very least, "nothing" is likely to be the status quo. Moreover, subjects exposed to the status quo may react in a variety of ways (e.g., resentment, depression) if they know that others have been exposed to some innovative intervention. In this instance, the status quo becomes a treatment in the conventional sense; it does something new to subjects.

4. It is important to understand that the issues outlined under "chance" apply to all varieties of evaluation research, whether quantitative in approach or qualitative. However, the methods for dealing with the role of chance are more thoroughly and explicitly developed for quantitative methods.

5. We will have a lot more to say about random assignment later. However, the basic idea is that, if subjects are assigned to experimental and control condi-

tions by the equivalent of a flip of a coin, the experimental and control groups will be, on the average, comparable before the treatment is introduced. This allows for a fair (unbiased) test of the intervention's impact unconfounded with *preexisting* differences between the experimental and control groups.

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